



# Youth

**AFTER THE WAR**

A MESSAGE OF CONSTRUCTION  
AND HOPE TO ALL YOUNG MEN  
AND WOMEN WHO WILL BE  
COMING BACK TO PEACEFUL DAYS

**BY S. P. B. MAIS**

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# YOUTH AFTER THE WAR



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To  
JILL  
WITH ALL MY LOVE



*This book is produced  
in complete conformity  
with the War Economy Agreement*

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

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# YOUTH AFTER THE WAR

## INTRODUCTION

No one has ever yet accused me of being a pessimist.

It is possible that you may remember my broadcasts about the distressed areas in years when several millions of the unemployed were pretty near starvation. I was not pessimistic then. I am not pessimistic now.

But I am, and always have been, dismayed by the too easy optimism of those who talk at Educational Conferences.

Those concerned with Elementary Education are so busy calling attention to the mote in the eye of the Public Schools that they fail to see the beam in their own eye.

I am no more blind to the mote than to the beam. They both seem big to me.

All I would ask at the moment are a few quite simple questions:

(1) Are you content with the progress of a compulsory elementary education system that at the end of seventy-three years of quite considerable expenditure of public money and an enormous expenditure of administration results, as it is now resulting, in our most enlightened cities in gangs of children whose speech is far more degraded than that of their great-grandfathers who enjoyed no such cultural facilities, and whose leisure is often employed in breaking and strewing the glass of milk-bottles on roads crowded with cyclists going to and from important war-work?

(2) Are you content with an educational system that can imbue its pupils with no more satisfying way of employing its leisure in post-school days than queueing

up for the cinema, spending its wages on greyhound racing and actually believing the lies printed by horoscope-readers?

(3) Are you content with a Public School system that allows boys of seventeen and eighteen, drawn from the best stock (not always the richest by any means) to leave school with no intellectual curiosity?

It is no answer to reply that in whatever other way youth falls short of our demands on it, it becomes, after incredibly short training, a first-class fighting man and woman.

That, I maintain, has little or nothing to do with education.

It is instinctive in the Britisher to fight well. We have never been beaten for the simple reason that we never know when we are beaten.

Indeed, the very suggestion that we ever could be beaten in war never even enters the heads of any British-born subject.

That being so, we are unconquerable. The most cursory reading of British history teaches us that.

We can always be relied on in an emergency, and the fact that anybody should be surprised at that only proves how ill-read we are and how ill-informed about our own national character.

I am not in this book concerned about Britain at war at all.

We win all wars. We shall win this war. There is nothing to be in the least perturbed about there.

What there is every reason to be disturbed about is our educational progress and outlook.

Opinion seems sharply divided about our intellectual ability.

Are we really as stupid as some of us are content to believe?

Are we indeed stupid at all?

Is it not possible that Emerson was speaking the simple



truth when he said, "No nation was ever so rich in able men"?

I don't know who made the computation, or how the figure was arrived at, but some responsible person has asserted that out of the thousand most famous men since history began two hundred and forty-three are English.

The world leaders in science, art, invention, oratory, statesmanship, philosophy, and literature (most of all literature) have not infrequently been reared in this small island.

The percentage of Englishmen in the world is small. The percentage of brilliant Englishmen is very high.

How are we to reconcile this with the well-established theory, by no means confined to ourselves, that the Englishman is stupid and not only has no ideas of his own, but hates an idea when he meets one?

The French critic, Taine, reminded us that "the English boy hates books. He neither will nor can learn. He prefers eating, boxing, playing cricket, riding on horseback".

I only wish that I were in a position to deny this.

Parents and schoolmasters are for ever telling me that bullying is, if not stamped out completely, at least so rare as to be an astonishing phenomenon in school life.

I have the best of reasons for knowing that to be untrue.

It is as instinctive in the child world as it is in the animal world, to be cruel.

To those who live in this particular fools' paradise, I would recommend the reading of J. T. C. Pember's picture of private school life in *Not Me, Sir*.

But just as we have failed to stamp out bullying, so have we failed to conquer youth's instinctive aversion to books.

Boys learn, as Falstaff rightly refused to, under compulsion.

Tempted by the prospect of reward (the School or Higher Certificate) or terrified by the prospect of punishment (detention or the cane) they will settle down to conquer the intricacies of the calculus or Greek Irregular verbs.

What they will seldom do is to read for reading's sake, work for the delight of work.

This is curious, because you know as well as I do that we are at our happiest when we are hard at work on some congenial occupation that will bring us economic stability or personal fame.

Really it would seem that the whole business of education boils down to this twofold aim—(i) to make us realise the nobility, dignity and delight of work; (ii) to occupy our leisure in the same constructive all-absorbing way.

Now we are all agreed that an educational system that stops at 11+ or 13+ is scarcely worthy of the name of education at all.

You might as well have a feeding system that stops feeding us at 11+ or 13+.

The mind, no less than the body, requires feeding all through life.

The trouble is that while everybody is ready (except the suicides) to put up a terrific fight not to die physically, an enormous number of people are quite content to die mentally, morally and spiritually, without putting up any fight at all.

They exist, but they don't live.

The purpose of education as I see it is to show the greatest possible number of people the greatest possible number of ways of living happily and fully.

I am not suggesting that this is easy.

You have only got to take the most casual look at the faces of the next dozen people you see in bus, train, restaurant, cinema, yes, even in church, to see how atrophied are the aesthetic, intellectual or spiritual appetites of the average man and woman.



There is, of course, an economic reason for this, which we are looking to the Beveridge Report to remedy in some degree.

The faces of most people are not only dull. They are drawn, haggard, perplexed and ugly.

Indeed, the more I look into the face of the average man and woman, the more I am astonished at its quite unnecessary ugliness, ugliness coming in the main from a lack-lustre eye.

This is not wholly due to the stress of war, because war braces the fibres. It is partly due to the inevitable malnutrition brought about by the war, though in this I agree with the Bishop of Oxford, who foresees unknown physical calamities overtaking future generations rather than us, as the result of present shortage in essential calories and vitamins.

It is mainly due to intellectual malnutrition which is as easily avoidable in war-time as in peace.

But, as I said, there is an economic obstacle standing in the way of our satisfying our intellectual appetite, supposing that the appetite exists.

Our life (not only in war-time) is so ill-organised that it is just about all we can manage in a day to get to work, do the work, eat, get home again and go to bed.

"If only I had time," cries the too-busy mother and housewife, "there are so many books I want to read, concerts I want to listen to, pictures to look at, places to visit."

"He found no time to live," is my own wife's epitaph for me.

I know that in Bernard Shaw's ideal state it will be unnecessary for any of us to work more than four hours a day, but I do not look forward to that with any great delight.

Four hours are too little just as fourteen hours are too much.

I want, and I do not think the claim outrageous, plenty of work of the sort I like doing and can do,

teaching, broadcasting, writing, enough security of tenure not to have to dread unemployment, and enough leisure to indulge my passion for getting out of doors when the sun shines and for occasional travel far afield.

I have no wish whatever to retire on a pension at any age.

I want to die in harness, to wear out, not to rust out, but not to go on living when I become a burden instead of an asset to the community.

For the community as a whole, I want something that can perhaps best be explained by an illustration.

I have just been sitting on a bench in the public gardens of a famous seaside resort.

An American airman, naturally longing for some friendly intercourse with us, sat down about three places away from me and began talking to three girls, pretty average shop-assistants at a guess.

The difference between his outlook and theirs became more glaring with every interchange of comment.

Two urchins were dragging a bedraggled Union Jack down a tiny stream in front of us.

Tiring of that, they began to throw stones at it.

The American shuddered.

"You'd never see a thing like that in the United States," he said.

"Coo-er," said one of the girls. "What's the matter with it?"

"Our flag," he said, "is an honourable symbol. If it gets torn and worn out we burn it. We never leave it about."

That remark passed right over their heads.

He then quoted a German author, and seeing their lack of response, explained that it was from Goethe. They obviously had never heard the name.

"I suppose," he went on, floundering more deeply, faced for the first time with our complete ignorance, "you'd throw me into that water if I said I liked Schubert."



"Oo's 'ee?" the most intelligent girl asked.

I realise that the newly-arrived American is unlikely to be able to tell off-hand whether he is talking to a duchess or a dairymaid, but the chances are very heavily against his companion being a person of much breeding or intelligence.

I want to see a system of education at least on a level with that of America.

I am right, am I not, in believing that practically every American boy and girl gets a free compulsory State education, and that a vast proportion proceed to State Universities?

There are still schools in the States that charge fees approximating to those charged at Eton and Harrow, and there are still Universities that are not State Universities, places like Cornell, Princeton, Harvard and Yale, that are very like Oxford and Cambridge.

In other words, it is possible both to preserve the best Public Schools as they are, and yet to provide far better education for the mass of the population, so that they don't leave school so woefully ignorant as our elementary school children are at present.

I cannot see how the abolition of the Public Schools is going to improve the lot of the elementary school children.

The jealousy shown by those who have failed to have benefited from the privilege of a Public School education has never been better seen than in a recent debate in the Commons, where a Labour member abused another member for quoting Latin. "A dead language," he called it.

Not half so dead, I may say, as the language that he himself was using.

What is standing in the way of educational reform more than anything is this attitude of envy that causes the same politicians to urge the abolition of the Public Schools and at the same time the extension of the system to include the whole adolescent population.



I don't care what system is abolished or what system comes into being, so long as we can be assured of a spread of culture and sweet reasonableness.

The Public Schools ought to have made far better use of their opportunities, but the elementary schools seem to have made practically no use of their opportunities at all.

They are like the man with one talent, who, jealous of the man with five, simply buried it, instead of profiting by it.

There is a good deal that is undesirable in the present class system, but it is a great deal better than abolishing all distinction between classes, if that entails the disappearance of an aristocracy (by which I mean the pursuers of the best in art, politics, science, literature and so on) and the substitution of an empty-headed uniform drab mob.

Equal opportunity by all means, but no two people ever have profited, or, as I see it, ever will profit equally from equal opportunities. Distinctions there must be, distinctions by which some people speak more accurately, behave more gently, and act more honourably, than others.

Professor John Murray has made some cogent comments on this point. "It is equalitarianism that inspires the attack on the Public Schools. Equalitarianism is not democracy, but the pedantry of democracy.

"Against buoyancy, goodwill, tolerance, and in a word, political vitality, this pedantry can avail little.

"A nation and a democracy in decline are its easy victims."

In other words, the best course to pursue in education, now and after the war, is obviously not to blot out the Public Schools, even if that were possible, but to extend the boarding-school system to those children whom it would benefit, to organise a constant interchange of teachers between different types of school, not to allow the scale of fees to determine a school's rank so much

as its atmosphere, to provide more opportunities for handicraft in the older classical schools, and more opportunity for cultural development in the technical schools.

It has to be remembered that children who have had no educational advantages have shown as much courage, stood as well up to blitzes, show as much capacity to learn the intricacies of modern factory plants, as anybody.

What they now need is a wider idea of the whole aim of education, to learn to think for themselves, not to be so easily satisfied with the vulgar and cheap pleasures that are provided so lavishly on all sides, but to plan for themselves an ordered way of living that will give room for the mind and spirit to develop along with the body.

Equality of opportunity is the great cry of the day, and it is a cry that we all echo, but what we are in danger of forgetting in the general din (which is confused by the quite understandable fury of those who dislike the system which gives the best education to those who can pay most) is that equality of opportunity is no good to anybody unless the quality of education is raised.

"Joc" Lynam is right when he says that children from the poorest parts of our greatest cities are those who would benefit most from a boarding-school education. This is because the parents of such children are unable to provide that stability of background that very nearly all boys and girls at boarding-schools enjoy.

In a boarding-school the child acquires the community habit. For about nine months in the year he is learning to be a good citizen by being one.

Indeed, according to Sir Richard Livingstone, he is then more completely a citizen than at any other time in his existence.

As our main aim is to bring into being as many good citizens as possible, the extension of the boarding-school system to everyone who is capable of profiting from it obviously is one of the earliest reforms to bring into

being, the only proviso being that these boarding-schools shall not fall below the standard of existing ones, and that, in our frenzy to level things, we don't fall into the error of levelling down, which is easy and fatal.

Whatever levelling we do must be a levelling up, and that, as anyone who has tried levelling knows, is an extremely laborious task.

One thing we need to guard against most carefully.

If a child of cultured parents is sent to the village or local elementary school, he invariably picks up the habits of that school and speaks with the accent or dialect of the majority.

If a child of uncultured parents is admitted to an expensive private school he, too, tends to pick up the habits of the school and to speak with the cultivated voice of the majority.

As there are far fewer people who speak the King's English than those who don't, it follows inevitably that if all children are to be educated together, the manners and speech of the majority will become general.

It ought not to be necessary to sacrifice what is excellent in the present form of education just as a sop to those who are rightly dissatisfied with Primary Education.

What I think youth will rightly no longer tolerate after the War is the insolence of waiters, the discourtesy of shop-assistants, the tearing out of lights in railway carriages (I have seen carriages where the seats have been torn away), the pilfering of everything removable from restaurants, the stealing of bicycles.

I have just returned from giving a broadcast in Bristol.

The train stopped at Corsham. In spite of the carriages being comparatively empty, a horde of young, noisy, cat-calling factory girls and lads came crowding into the first-class compartments, and refused to move to the empty third-class carriages on the advice of the ticket-collector.

They loudly declaimed that they had as much right to the first-class carriages as the first-class passengers.



They not only refused to budge; they ran shrieking up and down the corridor, banged all the doors to and fro, and in the darkness of the Box Tunnel the girls, either voluntarily or involuntarily, submitted to assaults from the boys which, to judge from their hysterical cries, were not just innocent high jinks.

Now high spirits after work are not only excusable, but natural.

What would never cross the minds of these girls and boys is that they have a social responsibility to their neighbours. The average man who travels first-class does so because he must have peace in which to concentrate on his work. He does not travel for fun.

The manual worker's day is over. His journey is part of his leisure. He has every right to enjoy himself. He has no right to disturb other people in their work.

This irresponsible, shrieking mob provides me with the clearest possible proof that Elementary Education has done little to implant a sense of civic responsibility in the minds of children, and without it I, for one, regard it as having failed in its aim.

## I

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

I WAS myself educated at an elementary school, a Church National School, for a short time. The experience was valuable.

What I remember about it, which is very little, is to its discredit.

I remember most forcibly the smell of boy. I remember the untidiness, the unmanageable size of each class, about fifty, the fact that we learnt the multiplication table by singing it at the beginning of each day's lessons in unison, and that we were soundly cuffed by the irascible headmaster.

Some fifty years later I sent my seven-year-old daughter to a village elementary school, accepting the widely-spread theory that Elementary Education had in that time been completely revolutionised.

The classroom, if possible, smelt worse.

It was incredibly dirty. The class was the same size, fifty, they still sang the multiplication table, and they were still being cuffed by a headmistress, suffering from shingles and nerves.

I removed her after three days.

I was sorry to have to do so, because I think it important for children of all grades to mix.

I have mixed myself with teachers of all types, and spent much time lecturing to members of the National Union of Teachers, who struck me as enthusiastic if rebellious, somewhat naturally, against their economic and social position.

As Frank Pakenham says: "When I lived among elementary school teachers we had no social intercourse with secondary school teachers, and later when I lived in the same district among the secondary

school teachers no social intercourse with my elementary friends.”

It demands a very unusual type of character voluntarily to teach in an elementary school if he or she has intellectual gifts suited to a more highly developed form of education.

It so happens that the headmistress of the Senior Council School in the village where I live in Sussex moves easily in every strata of the village society.

Her classes are small. The children are spotlessly clean. They do not chant the multiplication table. They are never cuffed. The buildings are models of taste and comfort.

This may be a good argument against Church National Schools.

I can only judge of the effect of elementary education by watching the behaviour of children out of school and noting their interests when they leave. Both these leave a great deal to be desired.

I don't at all object to a retention of good dialect. I dislike intensely a vocabulary based on American films and the worst oaths heard in public bars.

I do not at all object to high spirits.

I object to juvenile gangsterdom, cruelty to younger children and all animals, wilful sabotage and wide-spread pilfering.

The elementary school children whom I see are, in the main, devoid of manners, slipshod in speech, robbers of orchards, and generally undisciplined and lawless.

It is not, of course, wholly their own fault.

Their fathers are either fighting or in factories, their mothers on munitions or serving in shops, their teachers overworked and underpaid.

The exigencies of war have made it impossible for teachers to find time to teach anything. Their days are now fully occupied in filling up forms and their nights spent in fire-watching.

It is being left to the Youth Movement to make



up for the shortcomings of parents and of teachers.

The trouble about Youth Movements is that the organisers are inadequately paid. You cannot expect to get a Youth Leader to put in his whole time on a job that only brings in £250 to £350 a year.

Excellent attempts are made by the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides to divert youth's natural superabundant energy into useful channels, but they seem less successful in inculcating good manners and a sense of responsibility.

So far as Elementary Education is concerned, improvement in my opinion depends on:

- (i) The personality of the teacher;
- (ii) Far smaller classes;
- (iii) A much closer link between parent and school;
- (iv) The raising of the school age to sixteen;
- (v) The formation of the School Base system;
- (vi) The vast extension of the Day Continuation School;
- (vii) The teaching of crafts and agricultural methods.

(i) THE PERSONALITY OF THE TEACHER.

Far too many elementary school teachers become teachers because they are unable to secure jobs as anything else. "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach."

They have no special vocation for teaching, no special gift for inspiring the young, little passion for the subjects they teach.

Teachers should be like Socrates, burning advocates for the truth, scientific enquirers, or they are nothing.

It is a very curious paradox that so many teachers become teachers because it gives them a social cachet above that of those who work with their hands, and yet spend their time complaining first of the caste system, and then that they aren't accepted in the higher ranks of the social scale.

They are given all too little time or opportunity to make those contacts with the outside world that are so essential in a teacher, whose first requisite is to be *au fait* with the latest theories in every department of life. The teacher must be a wide reader, have access to the best authorities, and be given sufficient leisure to mix with the outside world in order to keep abreast of modern thought.

This, up to now, has not been done.

Education succeeds or fails entirely through the personality or lack of it, of the teachers.

(ii) FAR SMALLER CLASSES.

There are still schools where teachers are expected to teach classes of fifty.

It isn't a question of keeping order, because, as everybody knows, if you have something of vital importance or interest to communicate in a lecture, the larger the audience the easier it is to hold them.

As a broadcaster I do my best work when my audience runs into millions.

As a lecturer I talk better to a thousand than to a hundred, and to a hundred infinitely better than I do to ten.

But a teacher is not a broadcaster and should not be a lecturer.

One of the main faults of most teaching, certainly mine, is that it approximates too closely to a lecture.

That is solely because my classes are too large, most of them varying from twenty-five to thirty.

This precludes the possibility, so far as I am concerned, of giving individual attention to more than a very few.

It means that I know nothing whatever of the private interests of far more than half the boys who come to me.

It means that I cannot give enough time to showing each boy his errors.

I have to take each class *en bloc* and hope that a large proportion will gain some benefit, realising quite well that many will gain nothing at all.

It is this large class system that perpetuates the pernicious habit of causing some members of a class to be continually repeating the same lesson and doing the same exercises, even going back instead of forwards.

With classes of ten or fifteen, a master has a chance of keeping a regular barometer of change in each boy's work. He has a chance to sit by him and go, word by word, through his written work, or listen to his arguments.

To halve classes means doubling staff and enlarging buildings, and therefore entails a great increase in expense, but as the whole of educational progress depends on it, it seems to me that this is where the start in educational reform should begin.

Then at last we teachers might start teaching less and watching more.

Compare the rate of progress of a child working in the carpenter's shop with the progress of the same child in another formroom.

The difference is very marked and the reason for that difference obvious.

In the shop he has to listen little and to practise a lot. In the ordinary classroom he is expected to listen nearly all the time, and put theory into action only in "prep" time.

The trouble is, of course, that if we are faced by a crowd of youngsters, the natural inclination of the enthusiast is to spill all the ideas in his head and pump as fast as he can go.

I certainly do. I find it almost impossible to keep silent in form.

After all, I am paid for them to pick my brains. I am paid to disseminate ideas. To sit there and watch them read is more the job of an invigilator than a teacher.

If, however, we are limited to classes of a dozen or



so, they become perfectly manageable discussion groups, or they can act a play in which everyone has a reasonable part. They can work on a communal poem. The interests of each can be fully catered for and developed adequately.

And in any event, it is less the master's business to impose his own views than to find out the latent qualities in each boy and bring them out along the best possible lines with the least difficulty.

Small classes make it possible for the teacher to form an accurate picture of each boy's background.

It sounds difficult to believe, and I hate to have to confess it, but there are boys whom I have been teaching for over a year whose names escape me.

I know that I am slow in getting to know people and that my age is against me, but this ought not to be, and it is the fault of having to handle some two hundred different boys every week.

### (iii) A MUCH CLOSER LINK BETWEEN PARENT AND SCHOOL.

I always teach with my classroom door open, in the hope that some passer-by will pause and come in to take an active or passive part in the proceedings.

A parent not only has a right to see how his children are taught. He has a duty to see that his children are being taught aright.

A parent can be very helpful in a classroom. He can often contribute something very important.

He can also explain to the teacher points about his children's characters that would save the teacher a great deal of time.

We have so often to work in the dark, quite ignorant of the relation between the parents, or of the attitude of the parent to the child.

We too often have to work on no data at all, and form conclusions on premises for which we have no evidence.

Elementary schools have one great advantage over Public Schools. The parents are easily accessible. The

teacher ought to be a welcome guest in all homes and as much a friend of the parents as he is a guide to the children.

(iv) THE RAISING OF THE SCHOOL AGE TO SIXTEEN.

We are all (except the employers of juvenile labour and parents who regard their children as economic assets) agreed that education that stops at thirteen is not education at all. Sixteen is certainly the earliest possible age to take children away from school.

The United States realise that.

One of the worst things about our present system is the pitchforking of immature children straight from a classroom, where they are just beginning to acquire a relish for learning, into a shop or factory where there will be no inducement to learn anything more except the business of fetching and carrying, serving customers or giving tickets, checks and change.

We call these jobs soul-destroying. But little attempt has so far been made to develop the soul. We call these jobs blind-alley jobs, and to bear children for no better a life than wandering up and down a cul-de-sac, warrants the revolt of potential mothers who refuse to bear children for such a negation of all that makes life worth while.

(v) THE SCHOOL BASE.

It was thirty-five years ago that Mr. J. Howard Whitehouse raised his plea for the School Base, so we have had plenty of time to consider its advantages and disadvantages.

He complains that the gutter still remains the chief playground for our city children, and that their life out of school hours is, in the main, unorganised and neglected. The remedy, in his view, is to cease to build schools isolated from each other in congested areas, and in their place to build them in groups at certain bases, and at these bases to provide accommodation for the children of each section of the city.

This ties up, of course, with the extension of the Boarding School system for everybody, but whether boarding or day, he stresses the importance of placing such schools near Public Parks, and the establishment of swimming-baths, gymnasiums, kitchens, libraries, concert and art rooms that can be shared by groups of such schools.

Mr. Whitehouse writes with the authority of a manager of East London elementary schools and Warden of a Manchester Settlement.

He thinks it important that children should have constant access to good pictures and be stimulated by them to practise drawing, that they should have the chance of listening to good orchestras, join choral societies and generally enjoy music, that they should have access to well-equipped workshops to practise handicrafts in metal, leather, clay, wood and stone, and that their leisure-hour activities should be as manifold as possible and in the hands of adequate guides.

This, of course, presupposes the formation of spacious playing-fields and organised games.

One overwhelming advantage of the School Base is that it would provide an opportunity to give the adolescents a common meeting-ground while they could follow up the interests that they had first found there, and develop their initiative, resourcefulness and capacity for leadership as well as, of course, their aesthetic tastes.

The School Base would also ensure (as, of course, would also the Boarding School extension idea) that children would secure properly balanced food and adequate nutrition.

We already have the finest examples of the School Base in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where each college has its separate life and yet enjoys, by virtue of the close proximity of other colleges, innumerable advantages that no one college isolated in a town by itself could possibly procure.

But for various reasons one would like to see the



establishment of these School Bases, not in low-lying river-beds like the Thames valley, but wherever possible on the sea-coast.

If they are to be boarding schools this would be easy.

The only great difficulty to be overcome if they are to be Day School Bases is that of transport.

As things are, children travel long distances by train and bus to reach the larger secondary schools.

The establishment of rail cars would over-ride this difficulty, and it would not be impossible to establish whole fleets of special motor-buses as is now done to transport munition-workers to and from home and factory.

As I see it, the School Base would go a long way to provide this cultural background, which we all agree to be so essential for youth, and also would provide that outdoor background which is essential if we are going to continue to breed a race of good farm-workers and country craftsmen.

There would then be a chance of providing the sort of teaching that H. J. Massingham complained that he altogether lacked, teaching about social and economic history, geology, topography, architecture, flora, fauna, archaeology and the use of our hands.

According to Mr. Whitehouse, the School Base would make possible a correlated system covering all education.

It would mean the unification of all education, make possible secondary education for everybody up to eighteen, the exchange of slum for country life for every child, the provision of machinery for adult education, the laboratory for experiment and research, and the establishment of a new way of living more nearly approximating, physically, aesthetically, and spiritually to our ideal.

#### (vi) EXTENSION OF DAY CONTINUATION SCHOOLS.

Experiments that have been made, notably in Rugby and Street, show how much can be done in cultural

development, even under the present system, if employers will provide facilities after the day's work is over for their juvenile employees to continue their studies.

(vii) THE TEACHING OF CRAFTS AND AGRICULTURAL METHODS.

Every blacksmith will tell you that he has no apprentices to follow in his shop when he retires.

All the ancient English crafts are in the same sorry state. The age of machines has increased production and eased labour in many ways. But the horse plough still goes where the tractor cannot.

Horses will never be shod by machinery.

There will always be need of the human hand and brain, and in any educational system handcraft and instruction in farming methods should have their place.

This should not be difficult, because it so happens that for centuries we have led the world in craftsmanship. The tradition of good craftsmanship is so deep-rooted that it is difficult to imagine it being killed.

"Working", says H. E. Bates, "with hammer and iron, needle and thread, lathe and drill, our craftsmen are some of the obscure but vital motive forces behind the power of a small island."

He selects as typical examples the English timbered barn-roof, like the upturned frame of a ship; the church spire, streamlined like an aeroplane; the bed-quilt, whose pattern has not changed in a single detail in four hundred years; the farm-wagon, like a galleon on wheels. "This tradition, tough as oak but fine as lace, imperishable as stone but buoyant as a ship, old but infinitely classic, goes out and becomes part of the culture of the world. It is this that will not die."

I sincerely hope that Mr. Bates is right.

Keep that tradition alive and education will have justified itself. Kill it and education is a complete waste of time.

Over thirty years ago Edward Holmes outlined, in

*What Is and What Might Be*, the six essential instructive desires of children which it is our duty to encourage in elementary schools:

- (i) To talk and listen;
- (ii) To act (in the dramatic sense of the word);
- (iii) To draw, paint and model;
- (iv) To dance and sing;
- (v) To know the why of things;
- (vi) To construct things.

These desires are being catered for in the magnificently successful experiment carried out in the Village College of Impington, in Cambridgeshire.

Here are dignified, spacious, airy buildings, in beautiful surroundings which supply the necessary environment ("It's the background that makes the flowers," said the gardener), and in those buildings these six desires are fully and competently catered for, not only for children, but for adults. It ought not to be impossible to rebuild an England filled with Impingtons, a continuous chain of educational establishments from Nursery School to Village College in every rural area.



## II

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

THERE have been lately two clever but disquieting novels about private schools, *Not me, Sir*, a quite horrifying book in its picture of undoubtedly authentic bullying of a most bestial kind, and Hester Chapman's much less cruel *Long Division*, in which we are shown the sort of men they are into whose hands we parents so innocently deliver our children at their most tender and impressionable age.

All schoolmasters would profit by reading both books. The former is too terrifying for all but the most hard-boiled parents, but it would prove a salutary eye-opener for those schoolmasters who imagine that all is well in their own schools.

There may not be much holding of heads down in earth closets as in *Not me, Sir*, but I can testify to other tortures that still exist.

No school that I know of is free from bullies.

At the first private school where I taught I had to separate two boys who were going for each other with knives. They were both, I may say, quite beside themselves with fury.

You parents who have been kicked, bitten or scratched by your own sons and daughters will know the symptoms.

There are two short paragraphs in Miss Chapman's book that all private schoolmasters might well profit from. The first is this:

"Impervious, cynical, faithless," she says of small boys. "Bring them down to earth and their standards are absurd, their taste worthless: the superimposed aesthetic outlook turns a small boy into a dull foreigner trying to express himself with a phrase-book."

Here is the second:

"The divergencies between one age and another make keeping a prep. school a freak act; it is like running a community of atheists and Plymouth Brethren, or tigers and slow-worms. The resultant unreality of atmosphere may well produce that ineffability of silliness of which schoolmasters are supposed to have the prerogative; it unfits them for what those who are not of their profession call life, and no wonder."

I enjoyed, and still enjoy, teaching small boys, but I am under no illusion about either them or the men who teach them.

The children are often hard-boiled bullies and the staff usually includes some elderly, crotchety bachelors and some young men who are marking time. Not always.

The private school where I now teach owes its fame and excellence to its first headmaster, whose very pronounced influence lives on after his death.

He was one of the three great men whom I have known.

His method was to allow the maximum amount of liberty, give the older boys the maximum amount of authority, and require the strictest discipline when discipline was called for.

He was not interested in tidiness, either in dress or handwriting, which was a fault, if a minor one.

His staff was, and is, hand-picked, and are well paid.

Financially free from embarrassment, they are domestically happy and able both to keep in touch with the world outside and to indulge their individual sporting and aesthetic tastes.

Most of them are the possessors of good libraries and encourage the boys to browse among their books.

Most of them are travelled. All of them are keen on their job and as active out of school as in.

There is an extremely good atmosphere about the school, and all the masters are called by their Christian

or nicknames to their faces by the whole school, which completely bridges the gulf that too often separates the taught from the teacher.

Their honours-board testifies to the high standard of scholarship. They are equally formidable opponents of all other schools in games.

They are by far the most interesting to teach of all the groups of boys that now come under my aegis, in spite of being by far the youngest.

The fees are £150 a year for boarders. I pay about £75 a year for my eleven-year-old daughter to attend as a day girl.

As this is her fifth school, I have some authority for saying that it is worth it.

It is always worth paying highly for anything you value.

Under any scheme for compulsory, uniform, free education which carries with it the abolition of the expensive school, this type of school would vanish and the nation would suffer severely.

It owes its success entirely to individual initiative. I would say, in passing, that every school does. Education, as I have said, depends entirely on personality.

I certainly would gladly see a large number of private schools, whether preparatory for boys or for older girls, go under.

Schools that are exclusive only in the sense that they prepare the children of the rich for idleness and the spending of money on themselves, certainly ought to be closed down.

The products of the school I am speaking about take their place as leaders in war and peace, law, science, art and almost every department of life. They are given a liberal education and they profit by it.

Most of them have the advantage of a scholarly background in the home.

I disapprove of their untidiness, but I approve of almost everything else about them. Most of all I approve of their whole-hearted enthusiasm for work.



I have a caveat to enter here. I am all for boys of all ages working hard when they are in school. I am all against more than an hour's homework or preparation at night. It is all-important that small boys should get to bed early, at 8.30 at the latest, and they should go to bed with their minds free, not obsessed with a fear of coming punishment for preparation inadequately done owing to lack of time.

I don't think I have set a "prep" in my life that was beyond the understanding of any of my boys. The sort of "prep" I have always aimed at setting has been something demanding creative effort; a short story, a poem or a drawing to illustrate a short story or a poem.

There ought to be far more memorising of memorable poems.

It is a life-long satisfaction to be able to repeat to oneself memorable lines, and in any post-war scheme of education I hope to see a widely increased stress laid on the learning by heart of poetry at all stages of education.

The opponents of the private school where I now teach—every private school has its virulent opponents—say that too much insistence is laid on the classics and cricket.

I have in my time deplored the amount of time spent on classics, but I am rapidly being converted by having to read the illogical, uninformed speeches of non-classically educated members of Parliament and to listen to the vapid conversation of thousands who have lacked the advantage of a grounding in the classics.

Greece and Rome have much to offer the citizen of tomorrow, and those who despise them should at least produce an argument stronger than abuse to prove that they have found an adequate substitute.

I should like to think that the Greek spirit and Roman sense of orderliness and good government could be transmitted in translation. It ought to be possible, but the very discipline necessary to acquire the two languages

seems to be an essential of a full understanding of what the Greek philosophers and Roman law-givers stood for.

The opponents of cricket vary from the humorist, D. B. W. Lewis, who knows almost as much about Villon as he knows little about cricket, to the very serious editor of the *New Statesman*, who denies that cricket interests the average Englishman.

The truth is that cricket exactly suits the English genius. Lewis, presumably a Welshman, could scarcely be expected to understand that. It has a peculiar appeal. It is leisurely, unspectacular (except on rare occasions for brief moments), intricate, and has a capacity to bind together in one communion and fellowship men of the most diverse political colours and economic stability. It cuts across all class distinctions without making a political issue of it. The fact that very few people are any good at it makes it even more fascinating. Nearly everybody who plays it, likes it. I would never make it compulsory; but I don't know anything else which adds splendour to a summer afternoon so effectively, so there is a defence for teaching all small boys its very subtle arcana.

Classics and cricket may take a predominant place in this private school, but time is left for dancing, drawing and handicraft, in addition to the ordinary school subjects.

What I particularly approve is the large amount of freedom given to these boys and girls who, it is to be remembered, range in age from eight to thirteen. They are free to go into the town and shop, free to roam as far afield as they like on bicycle or bus.

In the summer, once they have passed their swimming test, they are free to punt or paddle a canoe on the river.

The only place they are not allowed to visit is the cinema, and I am glad of it.

As I see it, this type of school which flourishes now ought to be allowed to continue, indeed encouraged to continue, after the war. And the more closely the

elementary school can approximate to it the better for the elementary school, for this important point immediately arises.

Anybody who knows anything at all about education is fairly convinced that a general education, covering as many subjects as possible, should be given to everybody, and that specialisation should not begin until the pupil shows a decided bent for some particular pursuit.

Now in the very nature of things the elementary school child is likely, ultimately, to work with his hands as coal-heaver, plough-boy, railway-porter, and the private school child is likely ultimately to work with his brains, as a Civil Servant say.

For this very reason, I would have the private school boy given a grounding in farming, and the elementary school boy given a good grounding in bookish subjects, for by so doing the elementary school boy with a leaning towards learning will be given his opportunity to fill his proper niche, and conversely, the private school boy with a bent for carpentering or farming will be given his opportunity to adopt the calling for which he is best fitted.

The numbers of those elementary school children, like Jude the Obscure in fiction, and A. L. Rowse and D. H. Lawrence in fact, who want to turn aside from manual to brain work will, I think, be few, but the opportunity must be given. The numbers of those Public School boys who, like Adrian Bell, Henry Williamson, A. G. Street, want to turn aside from books to farming will be increasingly large, and the opportunity must be given to them also.

A further point to remember here is that an enormous number of boys whom I have taught in Public Schools who have shown no signs of making any success with their brains, have yet gained something of inestimable value to them at school, even if they have failed in every examination.



In the post-war period I should certainly like to see all Private Schools abolished which do not come up to a standard of efficiency imposed by some influential educational body.

The fact that such schools as that outlined in *Not Me, Sir* are allowed to continue and to flourish financially, is extremely disquieting.

I have already laid stress on the fact that schools of every kind stand or fall according to the personality of the staff, and, generally speaking, private schoolmasters are earnest but uninspired.

What is first wanted is an increase of inspiration, and it is, I think, undeniable that the types of men of strong individuality, who made so great an impression on generations of Public School boys in the past, are less often found to-day in both Public and Private Schools than they were twenty or thirty years ago.

To find and to train men with the vocation and passion for teaching—that is the problem in every grade of education; men of the stamp of Edward Bowen of Harrow, Hewitt of Winchester, G. F. Bradby of Rugby, Broadbent of Eton, G. M. Carey of Sherborne, Charles Lowry of Tonbridge and “Skipper” Lynam of Oxford.

These giants would never have exercised such a great influence under a compulsory State service. They needed an entirely free hand and took it.

They were strong individualists and had to fight not only the boys (there is nothing so conservative or conformist as your average boy) but colleagues, senior and junior, and, as often as not, the school governors.

They did not seek to reproduce a younger generation in their own image. They just set the younger generation with its face in the right direction and implanted in it a code, a way of living that never deserted it.

### III

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HERE is a report of a recent debate in the House of Commons.

Mr. Evelyn Walkden (Lab., Doncaster), referring to an advertisement for two assistant masters for an India Military College in which it was stated that candidates must be Public School men, said that the advertisement in *The Times* would do irreparable damage to us in countries like America.

Mr. Amery, Secretary for India: "It is necessary that the masters should be acquainted with that method of organisation of the schools."

Sir Herbert Williams (Con., Croydon S): "Why do half the Labour members of the Government wear old school ties?"

Dr. Russell Thomas (Lib-Nat., Southampton): "Many of us consider that the qualification resented by the Member in his question is essential, not only to the guiding of youth, but also for the ruling of this realm and empire" (laughter).

That laughter should give us pause.

The Public School question, as may be seen from this "breeze" has, unfortunately, become a political one.

There is so much confusion about the functions of the Public School that it might be well to define it. Originally it was the sort of school to which scholars might come from any part of England, and not only from its immediate neighbourhood.

But as Mr. Lester Smith wisely says: "It is doubtful whether any description will serve which does not draw attention to the social and economic aspect: for the Public Schools are obviously institutions which an

acquisitive society has provided for its well-to-do and its upper middle class.

"This naturally makes them unpopular with those who deplore class distinction, although it must be admitted that some of the most professed democrats send their sons to them, while all the political parties who have held office have recruited Ministers of Education from their alumni."

Some are new, some are old.

Eighty years ago they were criticised by a Royal Commission on the ground that they had a low moral tone, encouraged bullying, dispensed bad food, were poorly housed, provided a narrow curriculum and achieved a poor intellectual standard.

There are institutions that claim to be Public Schools to-day against which every one of these accusations could still be fairly levelled, but when a great personality like Arnold, Thring, Paton, Sanderson or Butler appeared, the schools under them soon got rid of these shortcomings.

So the whole question of Public Schools turns on personality.

Under a good man, Public Schools, whether new or old, can achieve what Milton had in mind when he said: "I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."

That may be said to cover adequately what we require of our best educational system.

And whether this is achieved or not depends upon the personality of the masters.

As I am now teaching in three different schools—the names of which I withhold in order to give myself the greatest possible freedom in comment—and began teaching in a Public School just thirty-four years ago, I have good reason to be able to institute a comparison and to form some conclusions as to the way things are tending.

I have always been strongly critical of the Public Schools, but I am at a loss to understand the mentality of Lord Latham and his fellow London County Councilors who refuse to collaborate with the Public Schools, and even more at a loss to understand Mr. W. J. Brown, who is worried because so few elementary school children get the opportunity to proceed to our Public Schools and Universities.

Really, however illiterate and illogical you are, you can't have it both ways.

Either the Public Schools are inefficient and ought to be scrapped, or if you are angry because they aren't open to everybody they obviously can't be inefficient or you wouldn't want your children to go there.

Sir Harold Webbe made a point of some importance at the L.C.C. meeting when he expressed sorrow that several of his fellow-members, who refused to collaborate with the Public Schools, had taken the responsibility of sending their own boys—without compulsion—to the very places which they were denouncing as possessing serious anti-social characteristics.

This was a barb that evidently went home with some force, because it led Lord Latham, the leader of the L.C.C., to say that he regarded Sir Harold Webbe's speech as the most meretricious that he had ever heard in the Council Chamber.

I cannot see much advantage accruing to the Public Schools by a collaboration with the L.C.C. I can see a very great advantage to the L.C.C. in being allied with foundations that put self-seeking a long way below self-sacrifice.

I hope that Lord Latham has read George Muff's report of the visit of eleven Labour members to five Public Schools: "We found wholesome, vivid youth flourishing under the best conditions. These Public Schools breed character. The boys have independence and poise. They think for themselves. We want more boys to share in their heritage."



This is the motion which Lord Latham approves: "The Council considers that the independent Public Boarding Schools are in the widest sense educationally undesirable while present principles guiding their management and recruitment continue: in these conditions, therefore, the Council does not wish to be associated with any scheme of collaboration with them."

Does the L.C.C. seriously think that the Education Committee of any local authority can compare in knowledge of education with any Board of Governors of any Public School in the land?

The Education Committee of every council that I know of, and I know many, are composed of butchers, masons, builders or publicans, who are knowledgeable about finance, and often eager reformers but seldom know much of the theory or practice of education.

The Governors of every Public School that I know are men of proved integrity, themselves well educated, and leaders of the nation either in military, ecclesiastical, legal or educational affairs. There is no possible comparison between them.

The L.C.C. complain that "the Public Schools segregate in general the sons of the wealthy and successful from the sons of the less fortunate during the most impressionable years, with several socially unfortunate results."

Does the fact that there are grades in the price and comfort of seats in a cinema make for socially unfortunate results?

Does the fact that there are first and third class carriages on the railways make for socially unfortunate results?

Does the fact that salmon is more expensive than cod make for socially unfortunate results?

Who pays for elementary education anyway? It is the parents who are already paying heavily for their children to be educated at Public Schools.

I am all for equal opportunity, but as a Public School

master, I know pretty well which are the types of elementary school children who would benefit from Public School education and which are the types who would gain no benefit from Public Schools.

There is no more point in forcing upon a born manual labourer the sort of education that only fits him for the black-coated profession than there is in forcing a plough-boy's education on one who is by nature only fitted for a desk.

The point to be borne in mind here is that there is no more honour in wearing a black coat than there is dishonour in wearing the dress of the farm-labourer.

Brawn isn't necessarily less essential to national service than brains. This brings me to Mr. W. J. Brown, who complains that not more than one in a hundred among elementary school children reaches a University.

Suppose his figures to be correct. Does more than one in a hundred want to? Certainly not one in a hundred among the people whom I meet in my daily routine is bookish or wants to be bookish. There is no more point in proceeding to a University unless you are bookish than there is in turning your hand to the plough if your bent is pure mathematics.

The Public Schools are an integral part of Society and the whole point about them is not whether they should be thrown open to the world—they're already open to anybody who can afford the fees—but whether they do what they set out to do.

They are not profit-making concerns. They are not a national charge.

If they fail they will fail because they fail to feed the mind, as a bad hotel fails if it fails to feed the body.

And that is my complaint about them—not that they breed snobs—we are all snobs—not because they don't breed leaders, because they do breed leaders—but because they still preserve one tradition that I've been trying to kill all my life—that work is something to be

avoided as a nasty medicine, not something to be lapped up like milk.

Recently I attended a conference convened by the W.E.A. at Rhodes House, Oxford, to discuss the future of education.

The main speaker was the editress of *The Torch Light*, the organ of the W.E.A.

She seemed to be angry because the Public Schools were boarding schools, and then immediately went on to demand boarding schools for everybody.

It is extremely difficult to follow the reasoning of these Educational reformers.

As Professor John Murray said: "It would be difficult in any other sphere of controversy to match the confusion and the errors that beset education."

Even Frank Pakenham, a Christ Church Don, an economist for whose intelligence I have a deep respect, and whose integrity is unquestioned, is reported to have said in a public lecture: "I am one hundred per cent against the Public School system, but I am at least ninety per cent in favour of the Public Schools."

What does that mean if not that he wholly disapproves the means and almost wholly approves the ends?

Does not the means produce the ends, and if not, what does?

Does he believe—he must believe—that the Public Schools are good in spite of themselves?

What does he mean by the Public School system? I can scarcely believe that he accepts the fallacy that the Public Schools tend to accentuate class distinctions. If he does, it is about time we had a clearer definition about what constitutes class distinction.

Is it birth? I should like the names of those Public Schools which confine their pupils to what are called those of gentle birth.

I have taught in many Public Schools and in all those schools I have found many boys whose parents openly prided themselves on not being of gentle birth, of being

what is so strangely called "self-made", which is usually a synonym for gaucherie and ignorance of everything except the capacity to make money.

Entrance to our Public Schools is certainly not denied to those of ungentle birth.

Is it wealth? This comes much nearer to it, because Elementary Education and a good deal of Secondary Education is provided for those who either don't think education worth paying for, or else can't afford it.

Quite a number of people have had their faith in free education badly shaken.

First, it has had a long trial and so far shows very little signs of approximating to education at all, and secondly, it is a characteristic of man to value lightly what he secures easily.

The best things in life may be free, and that may easily explain why we hold the best things in life in such contempt. What proportion of our countrymen look at even the most heart-stirring sunset, or even notice the burgeoning of Spring?

The Public Schools draw upon the best stock solely because they draw upon the stock that believe it is worth any sacrifice to secure the best possible education for their children.

Is that a class distinction?

Is class distinction a distinction between the wise and the foolish, those who take the trouble to think and those who refuse to think or are incapable of thought?

There certainly is a very marked distinction between the successful and the unsuccessful, and it is perhaps worth reminding those who are for ever shouting for equal opportunity in education, that there is just as much or little opportunity for getting good food for the body as there is for getting good food for the mind.

The Public Schools are not run as a business concern. There are no dividends, no shareholders to satisfy.



One good consequence of that is that the Governors or Headmaster can use their discretion about lowering the fees and awarding scholarships to the poor intelligent, and honorary exhibitions to the poor unintelligent, who, in spite of a lack of brains, show signs of profiting from a Public School Education.

I was a boy of indifferent ability, the son of a very poor country parson, and owing to this system my education cost him not more than £30 a year.

To find even that £30 meant going short of food and clothes and denying themselves a holiday, but my parents thought it was worth it.

I, in my turn, am prepared to sacrifice any comfort to ensure that my own daughters get the best education available.

I sometimes wonder whether class distinction is not often confused with speech distinction.

There is an inverted distinction here.

In their anxiety to satisfy the demands of the greatest number, the B.B.C., to whom speech is all-important, have now reversed their policy of setting up a standardised English of polish and precision, and now encourage a more robust provincial dialect, drawn mainly from Lancashire and Yorkshire.

It is strikingly noticeable that years of Elementary Education have done little or nothing to improve the general standard of speech among its pupils.

It has deprived the counties to some degree of their vigorous native argot and supplemented it with a slipshod, slovenly, ugly-sounding travesty of a language that makes me wonder just what they do in elementary schools if they can't even achieve an approximation to clear speech.

I do not demand that they should be able to think clearly, but I do maintain that after seven or eight years of schooling the foundations of clear thinking by clearly enunciated words should have been laid.

Clear speech is the multiplication table of language.

Without it you cannot possibly proceed to do the sums of human thought.

Elementary schools are too often convenient sanctuaries into which children who get in the way in the house are harboured with relative safety for the greater part of the day. What happens in these sanctuaries doesn't enter the heads of the parents.

Speech in Public Schools is on the whole good, and those who come from homes where speech is neglected soon find it advisable to conform to the common usage.

This insistence on conformity is one of the ineradicable traits of youth.

As a non-conformist in almost everything I deplore it, but it has this advantage.

In elementary schools the child conforms by retaining a standard of vulgarity in speech and behaviour that makes one almost despair of the whole compulsory educational system, in Public Schools the boy is called upon to conform to an infinitely higher standard of speech as well as of conduct.

Now the whole point, whether in education or in diet, is that there should be definite signs of all-round improvement, and those reformers who object to a gradual infiltration into the Public Schools of the cream of the elementary and secondary schools place themselves precisely on a par with those who would object to privates being picked out to become lance-corporals.

If there is to be no selection and all elementary school children are to proceed to Public Schools, the end will be a general deterioration of standards.

Is what is called class distinction a distinction between leaders and led?

There will always be the herd and the leaders of the herd.

It is suggested that the Public Schools arrogate to themselves the title of being a training ground for leaders.

So far as my knowledge of them goes, they have done nothing of the kind.

It is suggested that, in spite of that, quite a number of our leaders are not sprung from the Public Schools.

It has been my lot to meet many of our so-called leaders, and to hear some of them rather too often on the air.

If I had to make a distinction, which seems to me an easy one, it is that our non-Public School leaders are, too often, ambitious self-seekers (indeed, how can they fail to be?), whereas the Public School leaders, who often seem lacking in brain, are quite unmistakably men of single aim, and put the interest of the community before their own, as indeed they can, in general, well afford to.

No one in his wildest moments could accuse Churchill (Harrow), Stafford Cripps (Winchester), Pritt (Winchester), Sir Charles Portal (Winchester), or Wavell (Winchester), of being self-seekers.

Make your own list of our Public Schools leaders and see what conclusion you come to.

I have attacked the Public Schools for many years on all sorts of grounds, but not on the illogical grounds now used by enemies who want to see them abolished.

It isn't abolition that is needed but improvement, and improvement can only come from within, from those experienced in teaching in them.

C. E. M. Joad, who collects pamphlets on education and therefore presumably is interested in the question, tells us that there is widespread agreement that the Public Schools should be made available to all who are able to profit from them, irrespective of the size of the bank-balance of the parents.

This line of argument, followed up logically, would entail the giving of expensive seats in the cinema to those capable of appreciating comfort, the giving of large country houses to those capable of running them,

and the gift of artistic furniture to those capable of appreciating it.

I can see no reason whatever for the State making all education free any more than I see any reason for the State making all travel free or food free.

Still less do I see why all teachers should be compelled by the State to teach in whatever type of school the State commands. This is the negation of all liberty and entirely retrograde.

I began teaching in a Public School in 1909 and I finished, as I thought, in 1920.

At the outbreak of war I went back; it seemed the obvious thing to do. The R.A.F. wouldn't have me. The Army wouldn't have me.

Teaching was my job. There was obviously going to be a shortage of teachers. It seemed to be the niche where I could most easily fit. I was wrong. I chose, or was chosen by the wrong sort of school, the kind of school to which I was wholly unaccustomed.

The boys had no intellectual or aesthetic interests. They didn't even play games well. They were obsessed with the idea of gaining their School Certificate.

Anything that I attempted to teach them outside the routine subjects required for that examination, fell on completely deaf ears.

I was at first inclined to believe that I was myself so rusty as to have lost my technique after an absence of nearly twenty years, but I fought desperately hard to gain their interest. They simply weren't having any. They were, I imagine, as glad to see me go as I was to leave them.

I went back to a job where my hand or rather my voice had not lost its power to hold people, broadcasting.

I have been broadcasting longer than any other single broadcaster, but age matters less when you are not physically present.

As the war went on, I felt that even propaganda talks on the air were not enough. I ought to be doing more to help the national effort.



I tried again, this time, not at one school, but at three simultaneously, one, a Public School in the very first flight. It is a boarding-school with a slightly less well-known other boarding-school evacuated to it.

The two schools are not wholly amalgamated. They work and eat together. They play games, worship and sleep separately.

It was certainly a joy to get back to the sort of school that I knew.

It has taken me longer to get to know the boys than it used to owing to the simple but important fact that I do not coach them in games. A schoolmaster whose work begins and ends in the classroom is heavily handicapped. In spite of this I have found them friendly, well-mannered and possessed of a great deal of natural charm.

Their outdoor interests stretch beyond school games, to fishing, shooting, riding, and hunting, about which they are always prepared to argue with enthusiasm if not always with accuracy or good judgment. But allowing for the fact that they have to spread so great a proportion of their leisure in military duties I am still puzzled by their lack of enthusiasm for work for work's sake.

I do all I can to stimulate an interest in writers old and new, but whereas they will immediately fall to the bait of C. S. Forester, Steinbeck, Gerald Kersh and Ogden Nash they are for the most part bored by the old masters and are too easily contemptuous of writers of the calibre of George Borrow, Doctor Johnson, Lamb, Hazlitt and Cobbett. They do not make the necessary effort to come to grips with the great minds of the past, and what is far more disquieting they too easily jump to the conclusion that the fault lies in the author and not in themselves when they find him boring.

I find this particularly so with regard to the poets for whom many boys profess an active distaste.

I do not believe that I am trying them too high, but the fact remains that if a boy does not read what is worth while he cannot expect to write what is worth

while. And that brings me to the crux of my problem with the younger generation. Too few of them feel the urge to write either creatively or critically, and on the rare occasions when they do express their thoughts on paper their criticism is mainly destructive.

It is with the greatest difficulty that I can make them take any real interest in writing. They regard the writing of essays much as they regard the reading of poetry, as a distasteful task to be avoided whenever possible.

What is even more disquieting is their failure more often than not to grapple however feebly with the social problems which they will be called upon to face and help to settle after the war.

I realise of course that other subjects than Economics and English are regarded as more materially important to their careers, that there are examinations to pass and that the tradition of regarding English as the Cinderella of the curriculum is by no means dead.

It must be something of a trial to a boy whose mind is preoccupied with the immediate problems of the games he is about to play, or of the Service that he is so soon to enter, to look ahead into a post-war period that is of necessity shadowy, and may well for him never materialise.

Allowing for all that, I am disappointed at my failure to arouse anything like the same enthusiasm that I was able to arouse in the last war.

It is, of course, easy to make boys work under compulsion. It is not a method I have had recourse to, for according to my theory, boys, especially Sixth Form boys, should work for work's sake, not to gain reward or avoid punishment.

I like the staff very much indeed. They are untroubled and genial. They give the impression of being completely happy at their job.

Most of them are fathers of families living in pleasant, spacious houses. They do not give me the impression of being overworked.

It seems to me of overwhelming importance that a

schoolmaster should be a married man with children. He needs the stabilising influence of a wife, and the escape from school routine in the atmosphere of his own home.

The boys do a good deal of acting, and, like all boys, are good actors. They have reasonable liberty, which I regard as all-important. The better the school the fewer the bounds and regulations.

I should hate to see the school submerged, because I believe that it produces a very sound type of citizen.

My complaint about it is that it fails to implant in the boys the principle of the importance of hard consistent intellectual effort.

And we just can't afford to harbour drones in the post-war world.

It isn't enough to turn out a type of old boy who is remarkable for geniality, charm, good manners and skill in field-sports.

As I see it, there will be little or no room in post-war Britain for the man who doesn't cultivate all his talents.

Most of my classes, and I only take the Sixths, are over twenty strong. And the maximum number of boys to whom any master can hope to give adequate individual attention is fifteen.

The post-war Public Schools ought to and will carry on the best traditions of the Public School to-day, but two changes will have to be effected, a change in the attitude to work, intellectual development will have to take a far higher place in the boy's mind, and a change in the type of boy. There must be some readjustment of the fee system to enable, by means of State bursaries, or other means, access to the Public Schools for boys whose parents are unable to pay the full fees.

Apart from these two important changes, the Public Schools may well be left to work out their own salvation. If they fail they should fail through lack of public support, not be suppressed through jealousy by political intriguers who have nothing better to substitute.

## IV

### PUNISHMENT

ACCORDING to evidence supplied in *Not me, Sir*, the system of setting delinquents to write repetitive lines of "I am a liar" or "I must not be cheeky", a thousand times or so is still in vogue.

I had to write many tens of thousands of lines in my school days. It taught me nothing. It ruined any chance I might have had of ever achieving legibility.

Another form of punishment still extant is "Detention."

This is a period in which boys are kept writing or learning in their classrooms, at a time when all their companions are playing.

It is the easiest punishment to inflict, but if a boy cannot show up the work that he is supposed to have prepared at the right time, it is usually because it is distasteful, because he is unable to understand it, or because he cannot find time to do it.

He may, of course, be just lazy.

In any event, the person to suffer the detention ought to be the master, not the boy, for it is the master's business to set prepared work that the boy will have time to do and have a strong desire to do.

It is a well known fact that prison is no deterrent to a criminal.

This is not to suggest that convicts like being in gaol. It merely means that punishment brands a man. He feels that it is expected of him to go on fulfilling his rôle of forger or burglar, and when he comes out of prison he reverts to the way of living that has come to be expected of him.

He has been encouraged in the belief that he is an outlaw, and an outlaw nine times out of ten he remains.



Samuel Butler hit the nail on the head when he advocated sending people to prison for being sick and sent to hospital for crime.

There is something pathological in almost every misdemeanour, from sulking to suicide, pilfering to murder, and it has been proved that prison is no deterrent to the burglar. He goes out almost invariably to return.

I have never punished my daughters corporally, never in all my years of teaching, caned a single boy.

Thrashing is probably the right and only treatment for the confirmed bully, for the simple reason that he obviously, above all things, dislikes and fears what he delights to inflict on others. The German nation is the classic example of the type that can give but cannot take punishment, as the British is of the type that can take but dislikes giving it.

The idler is not cured by being beaten, nor is he made to realise the value of work by being detained or kept in after school.

The whole point of work is that it should be entertaining, something you want to do for its own sake.

Unfortunately, the fallacy persists in too many Public Schools that there is something admirable in getting away with the minimum, and scholars who really enjoy work are held in disrepute. P. H. B. Lyon of Rugby denies this. I am willing to believe this of a few schools, but not of the majority.

This is my chief dilemma at the moment.

When I point out to the Sixth Forms whom I now teach that it is disloyal to their parents not to get their money's worth out of the school, and treachery to the country not to develop all their talents in war-time, I am frankly disbelieved. That, they think, is just something that I am paid to say.

I try by every means in my power to make their work so interesting that they really want to do it for no reason beyond the desire, but whereas this technique succeeded

well enough when I was young, it is unsuccessful now.

This only leaves me the alternative of punishment, and that, with a privileged band of Seniors, I refuse to give, to the annoyance of my colleagues, who accuse me of encouraging idleness by shutting my eyes to it.

I have no solution to offer beyond striving to bring about a change of heart by continued hammering.

A. S. Neill of course has a solution, just as Samuel Butler had. Neill's boys, if I understand the Summerhill principle aright, only attend those classes that they like and only when they want to.

Butler goes further. He would only allow a boy to study a subject if he went down on his knees and prayed to be allowed to study it.

There is a good deal of sense in this. A young girl will make any sacrifice to be allowed to go to a dance. My own eleven-year-old daughter is willing to undergo any deprivation if only she is allowed to go to a theatre or cinema.

The same spirit ought to be evident in work; but here we come up against this problem.

Somehow we have to prove that work has an equivalent entertainment-value to dancing and theatre-going.

And youth is pretty sceptical when you point out that perfect dancing and good acting on screen or stage require as much continued effort as any other form of work. It is not easy to convince youth that effort of itself can be fascinating, though boys spend the greater part of their leisure hours in taking prodigious efforts physically to prove that they are stronger in limb and sounder in wind than their rivals.

Anyway, punishment is the last inducement to work, not the first.

Between the ages of eleven and thirteen I lived in a continual nightmare, due to the curious custom then in vogue at the Grammar School, where I was for

two years a pupil, of thrashing the last two boys in each weekly form order. I need scarcely say that I was more often than not singled out for that uncoveted distinction.

That gave me a lasting distaste for many subjects that I should otherwise have undoubtedly taken to.

I later, at a more lenient school, became relatively good both at mathematics and classics in spite of indifferent teachers.

I grew to like them, and because I liked them and for no other reason, I worked hard at them.

Examinations to many boys and girls are only a refined form of punishment.

I happened to like examinations, but my refusal to accept them as a serious criterion of ability or anything else is based on this curious anomaly.

In the Higher Certificate I gained distinctions in all sorts of subjects of which I know nothing at all. I failed altogether in English.

In the London Matriculation I passed time and again in every single subject except one. I always failed in English.

English was the subject in which I later became Examiner for the same examination.

For the written examination I would in all possible cases, substitute a *viva voce* examination.

I can nearly always discover all I want to know of the character and capabilities of candidates after a five minute conversation. From written examinations I can gauge neither the intellectual content nor the integrity of character of anybody.

So I certainly do not blame candidates for examinations who regard them as a peculiarly refined form of punishment.

## V

### SCHOOL BUILDINGS

JUDE THE OBSCURE's first reaction to Oxford was, I think, natural to one who from afar had regarded it as a city of light, the new Jerusalem.

"It seemed impossible that modern thought could house itself in such decrepit and superseded chambers," though "superseded" is surely an inaccurate synonym for "obsolete".

In our own day, D. W. Brogan, who has obviously given our system of education considerable study, arrives at the quaint but unwarrantable conclusion that "The main defect of the State school system (apart from the large number of things it does not do at all) is its very inferior physical equipment. The school buildings are drab, merely functional; they represent the idea of an age when education was doled out to the poor as a charity or as a necessary concession.

Probably no English public buildings (except army barracks) are less generously planned than State schools."

Surely this statement is based on insufficient evidence. I should like to take Mr. Brogan for a tour round some of our most famous Public and Private Schools. He would find classrooms often over-crowded, ill-ventilated, draughty, inadequately lit, with obsolete centuries-old desks and blackboards that would certainly be condemned in any elementary school.

I would then take him to some State schools. A junior school in Chester, a Senior Girls' school in Southwick, Sussex, any of a thousand elementary schools, built in one storey, with the sun pouring through enormous windows, centrally heated, parquet floors, desks and chairs exactly suited to the height of the pupils, blackboards running



along the walls, artistic pictures, gay friezes, epi-diascope, radio, and every possible modern convenience.

No, it is not in buildings that the education authorities have stinted youth, but in the quality and quantity of teachers.

They have sometimes spent recklessly on the outward show of buildings. They have spent far too little on procuring the right sort of mind necessary to move and leaven the mass under its charge.

I often wonder when I see parents being shown over one of our greater Public Schools, whether they mentally or audibly compare the "decrepit and superseded" buildings of this well-known school with those admirable buildings in their own town and village to which the children of the poor are sent.

The curious thing is that, in spite of the out-of-date buildings of the Public Schools, they continue to produce such good types, and that in spite of the magnificent up-to-date buildings of the elementary schools, they continue to fail to produce better results.

It is another instance of the triumph of mind over matter.

The faults in each are remediable.

I know that the Public Schools are not run for profit (at Sherborne any balance at the year's end is divided among the staff as a bonus—an excellent idea), but some of them make enough profit to destroy their more squalid classrooms which are a real and unnecessary disgrace, and if education authorities can find £30,000 to build and equip a modern elementary school, they ought not to find it impossible to raise the status of the teacher by giving him a salary commensurable with his ability.

What then are the post-war school buildings to be like?

Not like those Public Schools built about a hundred years ago (I can think of several), which are easily mistaken for asylums.

On the forbidding gates of one famous school there used to be (and still is for all I know) a notice which read "No admittance except on business."

Perhaps that has been superseded by the more abrupt modern notice, "Keep Out."

Such schools never give one the slightest desire to enter.

The new schools of the future will undoubtedly be built on the model of the modern elementary schools.

I hope that they will not, like so many of our city hospitals, occupy noisy, dangerous, foetid, congested areas, but be set in a green setting, many of them together, with open views of fields and the sky.

The only possible objection to the School Base idea is the difficulty of transport, and that is a quite minor difficulty that can easily be overcome.

With a School Base, that is, schools of every type all revolving round a Communal centre, it will be easy to have a large central school library, a theatre good enough to invite first-rate companies to act in, as well as the children, enormous playing fields, adequate science laboratories, art galleries, in which the children will hold exhibitions, museums of local treasures, large swimming baths, easy access to woodland and hedgerow for the study of bird and plant life, plots of ground where the children can tend their own gardens, and farms where they can be instructed in the elements of agriculture.

There will be a smithy, a carpenter's shop, a weaving shed, studios for sculpture and painting, engineering work-shops, a saddlery where they can work in leather, and indeed opportunity to study any craft from dress-making to cooking, boot-repairing to chair leg turning.

Group all your schools together, pool all your resources in each district, so that you can call upon the specialist in every subject to teach with the best equipment at his command, and from these nurseries of youth you will have a chance to produce a physically healthy, mentally alert, and civically responsible race.

Allow environment its due weight in the formation of character.

The sites chosen for these School Bases should have priority over every other demand.

Here is a use for those large parks and secluded country houses with superb views overlooking sea and forest that are now commandeered by the army and will, after the war, never revert to their former owners.

The School Base idea requires both courage and vision to bring it into being.

Without courage and vision a nation perishes.

Courage we know we possess. Vision is far less evident and far more difficult to foster. Without it, education remains a stagnant pool. With it, education becomes the river of life.

We need, as a start, to cultivate vision in buildings.

## VI

### UNIVERSITIES

To dine at High Table at Christ Church, New College, Magdalen, or any other reputable college at Oxford or Cambridge is, as Doctor Johnson pointed out, a refreshing and memorable experience.

It is difficult to express in words exactly what influence these older universities exerts on the young. It obviously exerts different influences on different types, but there is one glaring fact about conversation at High Table compared with conversation anywhere else.

It is on an entirely different plane.

Its standard of values is completely opposed to ordinary standards.

For once, economic values do not rank high. A successful business man as such takes a low place. Spiritual, aesthetic, and intellectual values are the only ones that count, and it is not only diverting, but highly instructive to find oneself in a society where philosophic argument takes precedence, and groups of men all world-famous, just ignore (because they are ignorant of) the subjects that take up so much of your time and mine.

We regard these professors and fellows as vague. They are vague about what we perhaps mistakenly call practical matters, just as you and I are vague about philosophy.

What to you and me are aery abstractions, are to them concrete and valuable. What to you and me are valuable—things like knowing where we put our glasses or pen—are to them trifles of no consequence.

I am not suggesting that it is good to lose sight of the material world, but I am suggesting that it is better to be keenly conscious of the spiritual and aesthetic world (even if it means being less conscious of the



material) than to be blind, deaf and dumb to the wealth of the world of the spirit and mind.

I am neither a philosopher nor a scholar, but I do realise the tremendous advantage that the philosopher and scholar have over the rest of us, and I want very much to see youth after the war striving more to extend its vision beyond the pursuit of mere material success.

The universities undoubtedly help to give youth this impetus.

Of the newer universities I cannot speak with authority, though I have given lectures in most of them.

On the other hand, I have seen my own University of Oxford undergo many changes.

I did not, as a boy, share Jude the Obscure's passion to go there. Indeed when the chance unexpectedly came—I had already been teaching for two years—I ungraciously refused my uncle's offer until my headmaster caused me to change my mind by saying that I should gain no benefit from it, as in no circumstances could I possibly take an Honours School or gain a Blue.

Without either of these distinctions, in his view, four years at Oxford would be from any point of view, four years wasted.

The fact that I took two Honour Schools, both poor, and gained two Blues, neither distinguished, is scarcely relevant. What is relevant is that I owe everything in life to Oxford. I have been as rude about her as Gibbon, but I believe that Oxford has something immeasurably valuable to offer to anyone capable of taking it, and what she has to offer has little or nothing to do with scholarship or athletic prowess.

What Oxford has to offer is a way of life. And I want to see this way of life in widest commonalty spread.

The trouble is that it is quite possible, and indeed easy, to pass through Oxford without gaining an inkling of her secret, and in consequence I am hard put to it to make any concrete proposal about post-war Oxford.

I want to see her gates thrown still wider open. I do not want the gates to be completely removed, for this would mean the creation of a quite new sort of Oxford, and the final disappearance of the very part of Oxford that is most valuable.

Oxford is an ideal meeting-ground for young men and young women to discuss at relative leisure everything under the sun, but it is only ideal so long as there is a strong tradition as to the subjects that are worth discussing at length, and a good leaven of leading proven scholars and men of the highest integrity to lead them.

There can be little question that the architectural beauty of some of the Oxford colleges is capable of exercising a profound effect on the adolescent mind, sometimes quite unconsciously, but it is important to remember that a quite high percentage of the thousands of Londoners who have been evacuated to Oxford during the war have gained no benefit whatever from their environment.

It is not everyone who is depressed by inartistic or ugly surroundings. It is not everyone who is excited by beauty in any of its manifestations.

Unfortunately I do not know of any means yet invented of gauging whether an adolescent is capable of being influenced by environment or not. You certainly cannot test this by examination, and that is one of the snags, both of the Public School system and of Oxford.

It seems that you have to take a chance whether the injection will take in either case.

The fact that the injection is expensive proves nothing beyond the fact that some people think it worth paying money to take the chance.

It worked with me, and I was most unpromising material. I have seen it fail to work with the most promising material.

I don't want this, or any other injection, to be expensive. On the other hand, it is worse than wasteful to

try it on everybody, in the hope that it will work in one or two cases out of every hundred.

I look forward eagerly to an Oxford of ten thousand undergraduates, and even sky-scraping colleges on Wytham Hill would fill me with pleasure, if only I were sure that there would be a commensurate increase in dons of the calibre and influence of C. S. Lewis, Lord David Cecil, Sir Richard Livingstone, Sir William Beveridge, A. D. Lindsay, and Frank Pakenham.

But such men are rare and cannot be multiplied suddenly to meet a new increased demand.

To open the doors to ten thousand young men and women by reducing the fees would land us nowhere.

It would be impossible to lower the intellectual standard required, for that is already extremely low. The fallacy that an Oxford degree, *per se*, is a criterion of intellectual ability, still quaintly persists, in spite of widespread evidence to the contrary.

I would like to see a tightening of intellectual achievement and a general raising of the standard, both in the quality and quantity of the work done, but I do not regard this as of prime importance.

What is of prime importance is that undergraduates of both sexes should become good mixers.

I am tired of the long continued howl to abolish class distinctions. I think it to be, for this nation, neither possible nor desirable.

What is both possible, desirable, and of the utmost importance, is that all men should be occupied in work in which they can take pride and gain from it spiritual delight and financial competence.

We certainly need to put an end to the idea that a man is socially superior if he works with his coat on indoors, and socially inferior if he works with his coat off out of doors.

A university, by its very nature, caters primarily for the bookish, but the schools of Agriculture and Forestry give a good lead in the other direction.

In post-war Oxford, I should like to see a School of Blacksmiths, a School of Wheelwrights, indeed a School of every handicraft.

That certainly would help to make a nation of better mixers.

It is often imagined by those who know nothing about them, that the Public Schools and Universities exercise some sort of veto on candidates born of what are called humble parentage.

It is and long has been, customary for the sons of crofters in Scotland to proceed to the university. Indeed in the Orkney, they claim university professors to be their chief export, but among my contemporaries at Oxford, and among my pupils in all the Public Schools where I have taught, there have been many whose fathers were of what is called humble occupation.

What controls the percentage of these in a University or School is not the educational authority, but the parent.

If the parent is prepared to make, or is capable of making, the sacrifice for the possible advantage of his boy or girl, all the authorities of whom I have any knowledge are prepared to go a very long way indeed to help, once they can be reasonably certain that the pupil is likely to gain any advantage from the community.

But this potentiality is extremely difficult to assess.

It is for this reason that I should like, whenever it is economically possible, undergraduates to come up to Oxford later than they now do.

Two or three years spent in earning one's living after leaving school would be invaluable in making undergraduates take fuller opportunity of gaining from Oxford what Oxford has to give.

It was mainly, I believe, due to the fact that I did not go up to Oxford till I was twenty that I gained what I did. I should have gained even more if I had gone up at twenty-four.

There is, of course, no age-limit at a university. Any-



one of whatever age is admitted, so long as he can pay the fees and pass the ludicrously easy examination.

A friend of mine, a lately retired headmaster of a school in China, has just come up to Oxford as an undergraduate, and is having the time of his life.

I certainly would jump at the chance of a four-year course in any university in the world in almost any subject.

I should now join all those Societies that in my foolishness and ignorance I failed to join, the Political Clubs, the Dramatic Clubs, the Debating Clubs, and so on, for what a university does more than anything else for its undergraduates is to help them to become good social mixers.

It has been said that the last enemy of equality to be destroyed among us is education.

This is certainly not true of Oxford and Cambridge to-day.

In my time Oxford may have been the rich man's university. Certainly there were many rich men up, but that is not at all the same thing.

It may not be generally known, but fifty per cent of the undergraduates of these days are in receipt of financial aid, either in the form of State scholarships, bursaries, Exhibitions or grants of some sort.

And this is all to the good, except from the point of view of the university tradesmen.

Except that he lives more simply and is less addicted to field-sports, there seems little difference between the undergraduate of to-day and the undergraduate of forty years ago.

According to a member of the Brains Trust a survey undertaken at Oxford over three periods, (i) when it was essentially aristocratic, (ii) when it was mainly middle-class, and (iii) now that it is recruited mainly from the working-class, has disclosed an attitude of mind that will come as a surprise to many people.

In all three periods it was ascertained that ten per

cent of the undergraduates spend the greater part of their time working and ninety per cent spend the greater part of their time playing games and generally enjoying themselves.

It is true that the undergraduate of to-day lacks poise and sometimes apes the self-conscious shop-girl, who must either dress too loudly or talk too loudly to cover her acute embarrassment in a restaurant or ball-room. But gaucherie is no more a crime than being young. Time cures both those offences very quickly.

I certainly look to see a wide extension of the travelling scholarship after the war, to enable the young graduate to visit and do post graduate research for a year or more at other universities in other countries.

The benefit gained by Oxford from the presence of her Rhodes Scholars may well be extended to all other universities throughout the world, by keeping up a constant interchange of students.

It seems to me of the utmost value that suitable children, undergraduates and schoolmasters, should all periodically be transferred for a year or so from their places of education in Britain to similar places of education in the United States or the Dominions under a system of exchange.

Whenever I have seen the experiment tried it has proved very successful, both to the individuals concerned and the communities where they have been introduced.

## VII

### RELIGION

THE one-armed ferry-pilot seemed surprised that I was not surprised when he told me how many times God had come to his rescue in the air.

"I can't count the number of times," he said "when I've been so completely 'all-in' that I've just whispered 'over to you, God', 'Over to you, God', and he's taken control, snatched me out of a crash, given me a rift in the clouds, and shown me an aerodrome below. It's just a question of asking, believing, and incidentally not forgetting to say thank you afterwards."

That seems to me to put the matter in a nutshell. Either religion is practical, something applied to every-day life, or it is nothing.

I was surprised to hear the headmaster of a famous school say to his boys in the end of term sermon:

"And in your daily prayers—and I hope you all do pray daily."

Hope? I thought that praying came to youth as naturally as eating and sleeping.

I am not in a position to judge whether the boys at the Public School where I now teach apply their religion to every-day life. They certainly observe the church ritual with uncommon care.

Every Saint's Day is celebrated with special services and incidentally is a half-holiday.

I have always been against compulsory chapel.

On the other hand I deplore the disappearance of family prayers. I don't carry on the custom in my own household because of lack of time. I suppose that goes for most of us, but I very much more deplore the dead-set made by educational authorities against formalised religious instruction.

I don't think it matters in the least which branch of the Christian church a family belongs to, but it ought to belong to some branch and hear in school and out, its tenets constantly.

I am myself a member of the Established Church, and like most members of the Church of England, an indifferent church-goer. I do say my prayers daily, and I do mean what I say. I do believe that God is not only capable of coming to my aid in time of trouble, but that He does come to my aid.

I do not force my belief on my children. If they want to go to church they go. If they don't, they don't.

But I do very earnestly maintain that it is a mistake to allow children to grow up with the scanty knowledge of the Bible that I find on all sides.

The Catholics take good care that all the members of their Church know the rubric. The Quakers take equally good care that all the Society of Friends show by their lives the steadfastness and truth of their inner convictions.

What causes me grave disquiet are the camp-followers of religion, the lip-servers, thirty thousand of whom signed a petition to the King to put a stop to Dorothy Sayers' series of twelve radio-plays dealing with the life of Christ under the general title of "The Man Born to be King", which the dramatic critic of *The Listener*, Alan Dent, has described as "by far the most remarkable and striking contribution to broadcast drama that has ever come within my judgment".

I would go farther.

Its spiritual value is so great that I found myself for the first time really in the presence of Christ and His disciples and understanding both His message to them and His message to us.

That there should be found thirty thousand citizens of a Christian country to revile this finest of all interpretations of their creed, fills me with misgiving.

The Pharisee and the hypocrite seem to have increased in number since Christ's day.



The Rector of Dartington has hit the nail on the head, so far as religion goes, better than anyone else of late years.

In an open letter to the editor of *The New Statesman*, he makes the point that that paper stands for the right values, "honesty, pity, justice, friendliness and the like", but without knowing why it stands for them, or referring the matter back. "You", he says, "were, I expect, taught the religion to which the virtues belonged, and you saw them in their proper, absolute setting: but you've been teaching the virtues minus the religion."

Goodness without God.

Kingsley Martin retaliated by saying that "teaching could be based to-day, not on the authority of an established church or of supernatural events, but on the only kind of authority acceptable to a free and inquiring man, on truth discovered by reason and experience, capable of modification and development. There are schools to-day in which the efforts to explain this positive basis of a good society are made, and I must place my faith for the future on such teaching and on the dynamic of building a society in which, as Tawney once put it, 'everyone would have the right to tell everyone else to go to hell, but no one would want to'".

It may be that the way to the good life for some lies in the Christian ethic and for others in the Stoic ethic.

What the true teacher should do is to give the fairest possible outline of all ethical codes and let the pupil choose.

The danger at the moment is lest the boy or girl should leave school without any standard of moral conduct at all, due entirely to the absence of any definite Christian teaching and, what is almost as bad, the absence of any substitute ethical doctrine.

Christianity may in practice have failed to set the world on the right lines, though I doubt it, but even if it had, a failing struggle towards the good life is infinitely better than no struggle at all, and I don't at

all like the idea of countless boys and girls let loose in the world with no sign-posts at all to guide them. We all know how easy it is to get lost in even the fairest countryside when the road are stripped of their sign-posts.

It is the first duty of those who are antagonistic to Christian teaching in schools to provide a substitute which turns out better citizens. Are they doing this? They are not. They are content to be purely destructive. To my mind ethics without revelation are arid and unlikely to evoke much enthusiasm in youth, which is instinctively ready to give allegiance to a hero.

Where, I want to know, will you find a more heroic character than Christ?

With Christ debunked or dethroned, ignored, spat upon and no ideal put in His place, can you blame youth if it wanders through the world in a state of complete bewilderment, taking its code of conduct as it takes its vocabulary and fashion of hair-dressing and clothes from the world of the cinema?

## VIII

### EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Is there a greater ogre than unemployment?

Perhaps sickness. Certainly nothing else.

Man is happiest when he is at work.

As Doctor Johnson said, there are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in making money. Idleness is the Devil's opportunity. It is in the way that we employ our leisure that best shows the depravity (or opposite) of our character.

Lucky indeed is the man or boy, woman or girl, whose time is fully occupied at a congenial occupation appropriate to his special gifts.

Owing to circumstances over which I have sometimes had control (outspokenness), and sometimes had no control (war and a national slump), I have frequently been unemployed, and it has always been a time of nightmare, not so much owing to the prospect of starving, as of being made to feel completely unwanted.

There is so much to be done to reconstruct a more satisfying community that room must be made for all to play an active part in that reconstruction.

Before I begin to discuss my own periods of unemployment, let me give you my picture of general unemployment following upon the national financial slump.

I spent the worst years of depression in the specially depressed areas of the South Wales minefields, Clydebanks, Tyneside, Merseyside, West Cumberland, and the Durham coalfields.

It was an unforgettable experience, and one that I hope never to have to repeat.

I am not likely to forget the sight of fellow-countrymen lying out in the snow and bitter wind of a New Year's Eve on the burning slag-heaps of Clydeside, turning

over and over like a grill on a spit, with first one side frozen and the other singeing, and then the frozen side burnt and the singed side freezing.

Those who were not unemployed were unable to appreciate the conditions under which the unemployed lived. They even complained about the dole. So do I, but not for their reasons.

To give a man money without giving him anything to do in return, is about as short-sighted a policy as one can imagine, and calculated to rob him, not only of his efficiency, but his self-respect as well.

It did both, as I very quickly found out.

At that time (1931) herrings were being thrown into the sea because the price fetched wasn't commensurate with the toil involved in catching them, tens of thousands of pounds of coffee were being destroyed in order to keep the price up, and the men who had helped to build the world's most famous ships and the men who at great bodily risk had kept the nation supplied with coal, were being allowed to starve, and it was apparently nobody's business, except, oddly enough, the Quakers'.

I never asked help of a Quaker in vain.

They gave me the best sort of help, not money alone, but personal service.

Week by week I went back to the microphone, reported the evil that I had seen, and poured out suggestions, every one of which, being constructive, was vehemently opposed by the N.U.W.M., who wanted to use the situation as an excuse for obstruction.

They did everything in their power to put a stop to the occupational clubs that we formed up and down the country. They made no objection to the unemployed sitting all day on their haunches on their doorsteps, gambling for matches. They raised no objection to clubs where men were provided with the alternative of spending their days and nights playing darts and cards, but they raised the most violent opposition to every attempt to encourage them to do useful work for themselves.



When the unemployed cobbled their own boots and shoes and those of their children, they were told that they were taking the bread out of the mouths of the local shoemakers. As they had no money to pay for bread to put into their own mouths, it is scarcely likely that they could afford to pay for their shoes to be mended professionally.

In the occupational clubs they learnt how to mend their own chairs and tables and beds, they attended classes in engineering and languages. By slow degrees they regained both the use of their hands, which were in danger of becoming atrophied, and also of their brains, when they had any. Most important of all, they regained their self-respect.

These clubs were extended to women, who came in to learn how to make do on the little available to them.

These classes were the forerunners of the admirable demonstration cookery classes now being held all over the country to enable housewives in war-time to make the best of what is still available.

The Quakers came and settled in the derelict areas, in order to share the life of the community and see at first hand what could be done about it.

Quite a lot could be and was done about it, notably by Peter Scott, the founder of the Brynmawr and Upholland schemes, where communities starting on a minimum subsidy soon found it possible to be completely self-supporting.

There was a general pool in each community by which each worker bought his meat, not with money, but with so many hours' work.

There were innumerable snags about the Brynmawr scheme in theory, as its many critics were not slow to point out.

The point is that in practice it worked, and is still working.

Peter Scott brought about the social and economic

revolutions that the N.U.W.M. were always trying to achieve, without bloodshed and without upsetting anybody except the theorists.

At the end of my research I came to the unexpected conclusion that unemployment on a large scale is bearable, because when eighty or ninety per cent of the workers are unemployed as at Hepburn, as they are all in the same boat, there is no great gulf fixed between a man and his neighbour.

Individual, small-scale unemployment is unbearable.

When I have been unemployed, and it has happened far too often for my liking, I find myself immediately cut off from my friends.

I feel uncomfortable because I can no longer ask them in to drinks or a meal whenever I feel like it, and they feel uncomfortable because they are lucky enough still to be able to afford to be generous, and yet fear lest generosity should savour of charity, unless dispersed with unusual delicacy. If ever you want an example to prove that the worst is the corruption of the best, try charity.

As I have myself always been in the habit of lending money without making a fuss, when I was first unemployed I made no bones about asking one or two rich friends for temporary loans.

I have still not recovered from my surprise at their refusal.

They were always willing enough to borrow or to lend when I was earning good money, but when I really needed it, they were quite willing to see me starve. The possession of money is almost always as destructive of character as the absence of it.

I have learnt from experience to keep out of everybody's way when I fall on bad times. It is like being ill. One invites sympathy, but one's friends feel a sense of grievance. That you should be ill lowers their own vitality. That you should be out of work somehow reflects on their own judgment in selecting friends.

But the worst part of unemployment is not the fact that your friends shun you, but that all employers of labour shun you.

This war, like, I imagine, all wars, has been difficult for a man on the point of retirement, who has not saved enough to retire on.

When I threw my hand in at the school where I was obviously doing no good, I thought that I had only to write to the Headmaster of any great Public School and offer my services for him to jump at the chance of taking one as experienced as I was.

I began answering advertisements in *The Times* for Directors of Education, Youth Leaders, Public Relations Officers, Readers to publishing houses, even secretaryships to big business houses.

It cost me a lot in stamps. I got no reply. I am wrong. I got one from a business man turned farmer, who had advertised for a secretary on his farm. He was surprised that a man of my "outstanding ability" should have to descend so low as to reply to his advertisement.

This reply cost me more than a stamp. I acted on his suggestion that I should buy his book. I also gave him an expensive luncheon.

A well-intentioned graduate of my year urged me to put my pride in my pocket and go to the Labour Exchange. That really made me angry, as I have never possessed any pride and am perfectly willing to spread muck all day if that is my best service to the nation in time of war.

I went to the Labour Exchange and was referred to a new branch specially designed, apparently to deal with men of my calibre, professional men getting up into the sixties.

The manager of that office had nothing to suggest.

There were, and are still, many part-time jobs going in Oxford, which are snapped up by, and exactly suit, retired Admirals and Generals who like (and who blames them?) a little extra pin-money on top of their

pension, and are not averse from spending half of every day doing research work, indexing and collating.

But again, a man of my sort with a wife and two daughters to educate isn't likely to get far on £150 a year, so I had to turn down this kind of offer, even when I didn't know how to meet the housekeeping bills or how to pay long overdue rents.

I don't want to make this tale of woe out worse than it is.

I was under commission to write a number of books (I always am), and publishers are kindly folk. I could have bled any of my publishers and they would have been as long-suffering as ever.

But I was in no mood to write books. I wanted to help win the war in other ways, and it is important to remember that there were many jobs for which I was professionally trained.

For twenty years I have been doing Publicity work for the railways, town councils, health resorts, and big business houses. I was obviously fitted to write propaganda for any Ministry.

I have been giving public lectures ever since I can remember.

I was obviously fitted to go round giving propaganda lectures, particularly on the United States, a country I know intimately, for the Ministry of Information.

My time of unemployment didn't last long as time goes. But it was precious time, war-time, and I was reminded on all sides at every hour of the day, that the country needed every one of its citizens to be working as never before.

I, who love work, was idling as never before, and hating it. It made me ill, mentally and physically.

The wheel turned, and now I have more work than I can tackle.

What I am concerned about is this.

After the war it must be possible to avoid not only mass-unemployment of the kind the miners and ship builders were called upon to endure in the years of the



depression, but also individual unemployment of the kind that I am continually and illogically called upon to endure at any time.

There must be security of tenure, not only in the Civil Service, but on the farm, in the factory, in the shop, wherever a boy or girl chooses to work.

With the dread of financial collapse, or of being thrown on the streets constantly upon him, nobody can do justice to his job or be happy within himself.

As things are, it isn't enough to be efficient and keen. No one has ever questioned either of those qualities in me.

We are the slaves of a capricious fortune and we deserve a better fate.

Just as there is more than enough food in the world to go round and satisfy everybody, so there is more than enough work to go round and more than enough money to pay for it.

It is the distribution of food, money and work that is all wrong.

It is all wrong that some people should never be able to let up on their work, and even more wrong that some people should never get a chance to get down to it.

It is all wrong that anybody should be allowed to amass millions, whether he gives it away in charity or leaves it to his own kith and kin. It is all wrong that anybody should be allowed to exist on a starvation wage.

In this business of employment and unemployment alone, we have got all our work cut out to reconstruct a sound economic system for youth to work in.

I am not particularly perturbed by the anomaly of a dustman earning more than a curate or a bricklayer more than a Bachelor of Science. The law of supply and demand must inevitably control rates of pay. What I am concerned about is that everybody should have an adequate rate of pay, whether he is a manual labourer or a brainworker.

A more soul-destroying business than applying by letter with testimonials for vacancies advertised in *The Times* I do not know. I have, even lately, been reduced to applying for posts which I could have filled more than adequately, posts so inadequately paid that I should have supposed myself to be the only candidate.

The fact that I have had no response whatever to applications that must have sounded worthy, leads me to two conclusions.

The laws of supply and demand are such that there are always a thousand applicants for a badly paid post to one applicant for any post offering a four figure salary, and I am also convinced that no one, however capable, can expect to get a job after the age of fifty-five.

One of the major problems after the war will be getting people back into jobs for which they are best fitted, jobs that they find most congenial.

What for instance, is going to happen to all these splendid girl pilots?

However large the extension of commercial aviation, there will be many men who have fought brilliantly in the air for whom there will be no job in the air.

To what sort of jobs are the men looking forward who have endured the desert heat and desert mud of Tunisia, or for that matter of any other battle front?

What of the well-disciplined W.R.N.S., W.A.A.F.S., A.T.S., and the rest?

Will farmers still require the services of sixty thousand land girls?

What is to happen to all the men and girls now making good money in munition factories?

What jobs will there be for Youth, no longer skilled at any craft but war?

It is one aim and a very good aim, to make provision for unemployment, but it is even more important to see that there is no unemployment.

A generation well versed in the art of destruction is going to find it hard to turn to constructive, productive

work, even if this constructive work is ready to be done.

The natural tendency after the severe tension of war is of course to relax, but relaxation after this war is not a luxury that we shall be able to afford.

It is unlikely that anybody will be able to afford any luxury of any sort.

The great country houses now turned into barracks will never revert to their former owners, and in consequence a certain irreplaceable grace and grandeur will have disappeared from the countryside for ever.

There will be need for building, but the building will be that of tens of thousands of utility flats and bungalows which will provide a certain amount of labour, but will undoubtedly further disfigure the landscape, unless more serious heed is taken of the Uthwatt and Scott reports that has so far been taken.

By far the worst feature about unemployment is its frightful capacity to undermine our self-respect.

It isn't only that our hand loses its cunning through long disuse (I saw examples of that among the highly skilled engineers of Lincoln in 1931): we cease to have any faith in our own capacity.

I have evidence and to spare (not based on testimonials), that in time past I was an exceptionally good teacher. I really could inspire in the dullest and most backward boy a real and lasting love of literature.

When I went back to teach, after so many rebuffs, I dreaded going into class, not so much through any likelihood of failing to keep order (I have never had to use any but the lightest rein), but through my inability to interest anybody in what I was doing.

Every period of every day for well over a term, I mistrusted my own powers, and in consequence did what I dreaded, failed to rouse any response.

I am overcoming that failing, but it has left its mark.

That distressing period when I discovered that even in the middle of a war, when every hoarding proclaimed

that the nation badly needed every man, woman and child, there was nothing for the man between fifty-five and sixty to do, try as he would, also left its mark.

Spending half one's days writing letters of application for jobs that you know you won't get, waiting day after day for the post that never comes, also leaves its mark.

The happiest men are those who never have any leisure, the most miserable those who never have any work, and though I know that it is always possible to make work, it is by no means always possible to get work that will provide you with a roof to cover your family, clothes to cover their bodies, or food to line their stomachs.

That state of existence ought not to be possible for any fit man or woman in the country, and it will be the first duty of post-war leaders to see that there is a job for everybody and everybody for a job.



## IX

### LEISURE

"SINCE the last war," says J. Howard Whitehouse, "there has been an extraordinary deterioration in the nature of the interests which have occupied the leisure of many of our people. This is due to many causes . . . one of them is the great vested interests which have arisen in the provision of mass amusements since the last war.

Let me give three examples, dog-racing, football pools, and the astrologers, all affecting many thousands of people.

Dog-racing as carried on, is a degrading business, and owes its continuance solely to its facilities for betting. Football pools degrade the game.

The strangest of all these mass amusements is that provided by the astrologers. It is also a symptom of the times which should not be ignored.

We are told that millions of people read certain newspapers daily or weekly in order to follow the prophecies of astrologers retained by the papers."

Miss A. P. Jephcott, in a chapter on "Leisure" in her illuminating but disturbing book, *Girls Growing Up*, tackles the subject of reading.

It is significant she points out, that when you mention the word "books" to working girls, they think you mean papers or magazines, magazines that cost threepence, containing captions like "She was an English girl yet she must never marry a white man. Why?" and "She was living with him as his wife . . . but she was not the girl he had married!"

A. J. Jenkinson in *What Do Boys and Girls Read?* found that out of three thousand children questioned, thirty

per cent of the senior school girls of fourteen read what he calls "erotic bloods", but that only 3·2 per cent of secondary school girls read them.

Sixpenny and shilling editions of the novels of Paul Renin and James Hadley Chase, author of *No Orchids For Miss Blandish*, are very popular among girls of sixteen and seventeen.

Young children get tremendous pleasure out of *Beano*, with its slapstick comedy strips and rapid action stories.

"*Beano* gives a grand world," says Miss Jephcott, "of ice-cream cows, catapults and pea-shooters, and the fact that so many older girls, as well as children, spend their precious twopences to live in it, shows how prolonged is the process of growing up."

Miss Jephcott makes an important point when she follows up her criticism of the material offered in *Red Star Weekly* and *Oracle* by saying: "If she were reading other matter as well, they would be relatively unimportant, but since generally she is not doing so, they are immensely important."

Certain public libraries, notably in Croydon and Norwood, have supplied a corrective by holding Children's Book Weeks, where prominent authors come down and talk about books, and the B.B.C. have done a useful work in trying to stimulate interest in the children's classics.

I found a tremendous interest in *Treasure Island*, *Little Women*, *Hucklebery Finn*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and other well-known favourites of the past, but I have no means of telling whether the elementary school children who only needed the hint to enjoy these, followed them up after leaving school.

## DANCING

I give many of my broadcasts from the Grafton Theatre in Tottenham Court Road, and I have often watched the crowds of young girls and boys surging round the doors of the Dance Hall that stands opposite.

It is natural and right that youth should love dancing, though I do not altogether like the types of older men that I see also thronging the dance floors.

Here are some statistics collected by Miss Jephcott from twenty-seven girls in London, Manchester and County Durham as to how they spent their leisure during one week in the autumn of 1941.

Their ages varied from fourteen to seventeen, their average pocket money was about seven shillings and sixpence a week.

Seventeen of the twenty-seven were reading no book. Between them they went four times to an evening class, four times cycling or hiking, nine times to church, fifty-two times to the pictures, and fifty-four times dancing.

Most of them just became keen on dancing through the wireless. Girls generally go off to dances in pairs. There are no general introductions. Dancing provides an easy outlet for their need for movement, and requires very little mental alertness. They like the atmosphere of friendliness and they like wearing and showing off smart frocks. It of course also stimulates emotional excitement.

In Miss Jephcott's words "the sex instinct is being over-stimulated at precisely the age when this should be avoided."

When they go to the films they prefer singing and dancing pictures to any other.

They take no interest in the News Reels.

"The cinema fills a genuine need for thousands of young people whose work is so miserably uncreative that at the end of the day they try to compensate themselves by living in a dream-world of action and colour and emotion.

"There is no sort of doubt that constant film-going makes girls of fourteen and fifteen think much, and seriously, of 'love'. All the paraphernalia of cheap romance, of light-hearted and whirlwind matrimony and of betrayals and recrimination are set before young people, who begin to feel that it is incumbent upon them to be experiencing the same heartaches and thrills themselves . . . they are basing their conception both of worth-while entertainment and of a life that is worth living on the standards set by the film corporations. On the whole these are standards which exalt violence, vulgarity, sentimentality and false psychology.

"Veronica Lake and Lana Turner do more for the girl of fourteen than merely set her hair style."

What are we to substitute for these vapid and vulgar entertainments, and how are we to wean the young from the bad to the good, from the brain-rotting to the brain-stimulating, from the cheaply emotional to the soul-satisfying?

You and I know how much our own enjoyment has been increased by contact with the countryside, by listening to music, by looking at pictures, by occupying ourselves in handicrafts, but how are we to communicate this enjoyment to others? It is not easy, for all creative uses of leisure demand effort, and effort is just what these adolescents, tired after the day's work, are not prepared to give.

The vested interests are insidious and clever in laying their bait. They have to be, because their livelihood depends on alluring the great mass of people.

The fight is a straight one between those who are only concerned to make a profit out of youth, and those who are concerned to make youth profit.

"A little of what you fancy does you good" is only true when your fancy is allied to good judgment, and if your fancy runs to cheap magazines, sexy films, or getting off with men at dance-halls, it may lead to anything but good.



To develop good judgment, to teach the adolescent to differentiate between the good and the bad companion, the artistic and the inartistic film, books which develop the imagination and those which deprave the mind, is our problem, and its solution is difficult.

It depends on the influence of home, the influence of the employer, and the influence of youth's contemporaries.

You cannot expect the growing girl or boy to take an interest in literature if the home lacks books, or the parents lack interest.

You cannot expect youth to appreciate music if it never gets the chance of hearing any.

The countryside waits in vain to provide youth with the fulfilment of its desires to worship beauty if no one will give youth the necessary prod to get out and have a look at the country.

Miss Jephcott finds a solution in the extension of Boys' and Girls' clubs.

But as she says, "A club is essentially a place for warm, light-hearted social life. Fun and spontaneity must be evident: jokes, comic papers, parties, charades, concerts, dances, these are the signs of a living group of young people."

I have too often found the tone set by earnest-minded over-anxious helpers to be too serious, and all youth's natural exuberance of spirits stifled.

I like the idea of clubs. In practice they too often fall far short of their aim, which is to beat the cinema, dance-hall or cheap magazine as a form of entertainment.

They are only too frequently just dull, and dullness is the one unforgivable sin in social life, as it is in artistic expression.

Youth must in its leisure be free, and enjoy its freedom as a puppy does.

In our effort to prevent it from coming to harm, we limit that freedom so much that it runs away.

A puppy cannot be kept on a lead all its life, and youth

chafes at fetters and restrictions in precisely the same way.

All we can do is to make the country accessible, and hope that youth will get from it what Jefferies and Hudson got from it, make pictures and music accessible, and hope that they will be stimulated as we are.

It is no good frowning on their passion for poor films unless we can arouse an equal passion for something more worth while.

Teachers of course have a grand chance in school, but most teachers know how dangerous it is to recommend anything to youth.

It is only too easy to kill any possible chance of a child ever coming to appreciate, say, Jane Austen, by introducing the child to her before that child is capable of enjoying her.

And if the child finds that it cannot share your enjoyment in one poem or one novel, it has the nasty habit of mistrusting your adulation of all poems and all novels.

In any event youth, wisely I think, mistrusts all adult advice based on the "it'll do you good" principle.

Children don't want to be done good to. They want to satisfy their appetites.

It is perhaps unfortunate in some ways that third-rate music should have so pleasant a lilt, that poor pictures should appeal so immediately to the senses, that "erotic bloods" should so quickly stimulate the emotions.

The only satisfying argument that one can bring to bear on this question is an analogy from sport.

There isn't any real fun in playing a game that you find easy.

The great virtue of cricket or tennis or golf or football is that there is always something to learn, and that the harder you work at it the more you enjoy it.

The same is true of aesthetic appreciation, the cultivation of taste.

The more you read Shakespeare the better you like him.

The more you hear the too easy lilt of the latest fox-trot the less you like it. You very quickly get from it all it has to give, and repetition after that only serves to infuriate. It becomes as tedious as a twice-told tale.

The countryside never palls, because it has always some fresh facet to reveal to the keen observer.

Even the most rabid cinema-goer seldom visits the same film twice. The star that enchants this season is eclipsed and forgotten long before next year.

You seldom hear any thinking person say "I've seen 'Hamlet'. Let's go to something else."

You often hear people say "I've seen 'One Night of Love'. I don't want to see that again."

Then there is our business, so far as leisure is concerned, to divert youth from the meretricious, the pleasure, if any, from which is evanescent, and to introduce them to pleasures that increase in intensity the more you return to them, that satisfy our inmost and highest cravings.

Perhaps the surest way to gauge most accurately the effect of home influence or of education on the growing girl and boy is to watch them at play, to note how they occupy their spare time.

"Religion," said the philosopher, "is what a man does with his loneliness."

It has been said that an Englishman makes a religion of his games. This is perhaps less true than it was before the war, but I view with a good deal of misgiving any return to a world in which youth imagines leisure to be well spent that is spent in watching professionals play their games for them.

I certainly want to see every village green in the country occupied by cricketers every summer Saturday afternoon and by footballers every winter Saturday afternoon, for this inter-village rivalry does much to preserve village pride and to foster a sense of unity.

I want to see an enormous increase in the number of

playing-fields made accessible to youth, where they can play either individually or in pick-up teams.

On the other hand, I want to see far less compulsory cricket and football in our Public Schools.

When I started life as a Public School master (incidentally as games-master) games were compulsory for every boy, not because games are good for boys, but in order that an eye might be kept on all the boys, lest they should be getting into some sort of mischief.

The inevitable consequence of this system was that a good deal of very undesirable mischief was rife.

Just as compulsory attendance in chapel is no way to produce a church-goer, so compulsory playing of games is no way to induce a love of games.

I speak with some authority here, for I am myself a passionate lover of cricket, in spite of an almost complete inability to play the game, just as I used to be a passionate lover of Rugger. I have had to force generations of boys at least as inept as myself to play games that have only resulted in giving them a life-long distaste for them.

The team-spirit idea can easily be overdone. What is much rarer and much more essential, both to personal development and to the training of a good citizen, is to cultivate individual observation and initiative.

There are of course in most schools, both Public and Elementary, Natural History societies.

Their results in fostering enthusiasm for the world of nature are sadly disappointing.

The boy or girl who benefits from looking at flowers or listening to birds usually goes off on his or her own.

This quite natural inclination to be by one's self is regarded with suspicion as anti-social.

I want to see it encouraged as widely as possible. We cannot know too much of the natural world. We cannot spend too much time out of doors in the countryside.

That is one reason why in any post-war reconstruction we have to plan for a wide extension of Youth Hostels.

I have been a member of the Youth Hostels ever since



their inception. I never use them because I am not a youth, and am too old to enjoy their relative discomfort.

But they are essential if we are to provide youth with the means to explore and enjoy the countryside, which is their birthright. They provide an admirable safety-valve to the city worker and counterblast to the city football ground and cinema.

They provide an ideal meeting-ground for boys and girls who share a common interest.

Together they can not only look up to those hills whence cometh their help, but also scale those heights which give them the best sense of that freedom which is their finest heritage.

How all-important it is to fill the mind through the eye with beauty, its influence on character incalculable.

But even the provision of many more Youth Hostels is not enough. The seed must be sown earlier, at home, in the school.

In their early stages, children need no incentive to dam up brooks, to wander off into the woods, to explore the sources of rivers or to climb hills.

It is only when the shades of the prison-house begin to close in on them that this outlet for their energy is denied and their attention diverted to standardised, passive entertainment.

If all cinemas were closed to youth to-morrow, they wouldn't be a penny the worse. Indeed they would be infinitely the better for it.

Such compulsion in the true interest of youth can never be contemplated through fear of vested interests, which are among the most greedy and powerful ogres of our time.

Parents of course, can do an immense amount in stimulating interest in their children for butterflies, birds and flowers. The trouble there is that not one parent in ten thousand knows anything, or cares anything about tree or plant or animal life.

We have ourselves been too long shut off from this close communion with nature.

How ignorant of all country crafts are you and I, compared with Gabriel Oak, Giles Winterbourne, or even Marty South, none of whom suffered from educational "reform".

If I want to feel inferior to-day, I don't go to London. I go to the country and watch a blacksmith welding together two pieces of iron, or a wheelwright making a cartwheel.

If I want to know something about horses I don't go to a race meeting. I stay on a farm and ride one.

It has now long been the fashion to dismiss lovers of hunting, fishing and shooting as "gormless" snobs. It has been my good fortune to meet many followers of these sports, and I find their conversation and outlook on life far more stimulating, far more healthy, and far more knowledgeable than the conversation and outlook of those who attack them.

Hunting may well and rightly be the Sport of Kings and the King of Sports, it is equally a sport which every farm-labourer follows with a wild enthusiasm, and instead of being the most exclusive and expensive of sports it is the most democratic and cheapest, for the man who follows the hunt on foot is not called upon to pay a penny piece and is given the freedom of the whole countryside.

In any post-war reconstruction for youth's leisure, encouragement to follow hounds, to hold a gun and to handle a rod should certainly take a place.

It is a typically British anomaly that those who sentimentalise animals know least about them and are the first to ill-treat them.

How otherwise do you explain the caging of wild birds by those who object to the breeding of pheasants?

If youth is to get the best out of its leisure there must be far greater access to hills and coastal cliffs than we at present enjoy. It will no longer, I hope, be possible for

private landowners to prevent youth from wandering at will over grouse moors or deer forests, and the whole coastline should be kept open for walkers, as well as the National Parks of Dovedale, Snowdonia, Dartmoor, Exmoor, the Lake District, the Highlands, and the great backbone of the Pennine Range.

The extension of bird sanctuaries will do much to stimulate a scientific study of the habits of birds, one of the most enjoyable and useful ways of employing leisure ever devised.

I don't feel any sense of perturbation at the thought of an increase in the number of adolescents seeking entertainment in "pubs", for the simple reason that the tradition of youth is to leave the bar to their elders, but if they do go they gain little but good, for the talk in pubs is informative, dynamic and entertaining, the quality of the beer is not of a kind to stimulate drunkenness, it is a very good meeting-place for all types and social grades, and though the language may be free, it is practically never degrading. There is a very strict ethical code in most of the pubs that I know which precludes all loose talk. By pubs I do not mean cocktail bars, which attract vicious types of youngsters whom I never see in the public bars of the average public house.

I should like to see a much higher degree of interest taken in swimming and skating. Our standard of swimming is deplorably low when we take into account the number of rivers and streams available. That may be due of course to our uncertain climate.

But when darkness falls and outdoor sports, tennis, football, cricket and the like are impossible, I would far rather see a queue outside an inn (I have never yet seen one) than a queue waiting to enter a cinema, unless that cinema has in its programme that all too rare sort of documentary film that gives you the life of bird, fish or animal, or depicts the development of some craft or industry.

And in any event, whatever we propose as an alternative to the dance-hall or cinema, it is obvious that unless we can guarantee to youth that it possesses at least equal entertainment-value they will scarcely be likely to be attracted by it.

It is impracticable to wean youth from the glamour of the meretricious to the good unless the good has at least an equal glamour. Our business is to prove that the good provides a glamour and a fascination that is more lasting.



## X

### READING

As my own life has been influenced greatly by reading and walking about the countryside it is only natural that I should lay great stress on books.

The reading of the right sort of book has an enormous bearing on the development of adolescent character.

This being so, we immediately find ourselves on the horns of a dilemma.

Are we to keep children away from the vulgar magazine for which it hankers and impose what we consider to be the best, or are we to let them naturally gravitate to what their instincts demand?

I have never imposed any sort of reading on my children. Up till a few months ago their staple diet was *Tiger Tim* and *Beano*, which they read from cover to cover. They have proceeded to Enid Blyton.

I am not worrying overmuch, except to lament their ignorance of the Bible story and their lack of interest in poetry.

Much has been done to rouse a love of the more lasting sort of book by progressive borough librarians. Book weeks for children, made attractive by talks given by eminent authors, have helped a great deal. What worries me is the deplorably low standard of books that I see the average citizen reading in buses, tubes, trains or on holiday.

I have for a long time written a weekly article for *Home Chat* recommending books, new and old, that seem to me to be calculated to provide food for thought, to set the imagination going, and to stir up the deeper emotions, and I have proof that my recommendations are helpful.

When on the "Kitchen Front" I recommend a particular food on the air, my post immediately becomes

almost impossible to tackle. When I recommend books on the air, whether to children or grown-ups, I get only a slight increase in my correspondence.

On the other hand, there is no question that this is a golden age for books, because those wage-earners with money to burn, of whom there is a vastly increased number, now find most shops closed to them, either because the stocks are finished or that coupons are required.

No coupons are as yet required for books, and in spite of the severe paper shortage, books are astonishingly plentiful.

I have not yet seen a queue outside any bookshop, but I have frequently found it difficult to move inside a bookshop, and I am delighted at the significant implication.

It is true that the majority of books offered for sale and bought have some bearing on the war, and it is equally true that far too many good books, formerly obtainable in "The World's Classics" and "Everyman", have been allowed to go out of print.

I have just finished giving a course of lectures to a branch of the Workers' Educational Association and I have been surprised and delighted by the evidence there given that the rank and file of working—class readers are keeping abreast of modern thought and criticism.

The greater part of my time is, of course, spent in a Public School which has a high reputation for reading and a well-stocked library.

Unquestionably here the standard of reading is infinitely higher than it was when I was at school, when I seemed to read and to be encouraged by the Librarian to read only Guy Boothby and G. A. Henty.

There is no doubt whatever that small children are much better catered for now than before the war.

The format of children's books, the calibre of the authors who write children's books, and the aesthetic talent of the illustrators of children's books are all on a much higher level.

And to counterbalance the inevitable rise in price of the more expensive book there is still the astonishing spate of ninepenny *Penguin*, *Puffin*, *Pelican* and other paper-backed books, which now contain pretty well every type of book that any intelligent citizen can need.

What I want to see after the war is the formation, as early in life as possible, of a home library in every home.

There can never be too many books in a house, even if they spill over from the shelves to the tables, chairs and floors, always presupposing that these books are being constantly referred to and not collected, as some collectors collect first editions, as an investment or museum pieces.

But the immediate problem is now, and will be after the war, to know how to implant, as early as possible, a love of reading.

It naturally begins with reading aloud.

Every child loves being read to. How few of us can ever find the time to do that, or, for that matter, give time to the solution of the problem of what to read to whom.

The National Book Council once issued a list of suitable books, graded in age-groups, and a very useful pamphlet giving a comprehensive list of all the best books for children between the ages of five and fourteen is obtainable, which should be in every household where there are children.

I believe in letting the adolescent read whatever he or she has a mind to.

It saves the hiding under pillows of books that read openly and discussed freely would scarcely ever lead to harm, but gloated over surreptitiously may well implant most undesirable seeds.

When I started teaching I remember smirks, guffaws, and blushes when such words as "womb" or "whore" cropped up in Psalm or Shakespeare.

That is the worst of all signs. I think, and I certainly devoutly hope, that we have moved a long way since those dark days.

I don't object to "sexy" jokes among men, providing always that they are neat and clever, though I find myself much less happy at "sexy" jokes among women, even when they are neat and clever, but my distaste for smirking and guffaws quickly grows to a disgust bordering on physical sickness when I see it in youth.

To counteract this I would have youth know all about the sexual impulses as soon as ever it shows any inclination to know.

The best place by far is on a farm, where the whole of a farmer's living depends on propagation, whether in live stock or grain.

The farm boy's and farm girl's attitude to sex is nearly always healthy. It is much more difficult for those who get their first sex information from books to get sex into proper perspective.

There is a close analogy here with the adolescent attitude to that other great mystery of the Universe, God.

I find it much less easy to understand Creation or Man's relations with the Infinite from books than from the countryside.

To stand still on any starlit night in the countryside is to realise both the immensity and the orderliness of the Universe quite easily. It is impossible not to pay homage to the Master mind.

In the library and in the city, the work of man has so clouded and frustrated the work of God that it is much more difficult to find clear revelation.

Yet our interpretation, both of the functions of the body and of the functions of the spirit, must come either from parents, acquaintances or books.

Parents shirk their duty, acquaintances too often delight in shocking innocence, and books too often pander to the vicious and perverse that is latent in nearly all of us.

The society of books is exactly analogous to the society of men.

Evil communications do undoubtedly corrupt good



manners, and much mingling with the superficial and sordid inevitably makes us superficial and sordid.

We are, like it or not, very apt to take our colour from our surroundings, like the chameleon.

So though I very seldom interfere with youth's choice in reading, I do go a long way to leave the more profitable sort of books under their noses, and drop hints about their fascination. What I do not do is to rub their noses in Jane Austen or Wordsworth.

I feel intensely sorry for a boy or girl who has a distaste for poetry, just as I pity anyone who fails to appreciate music. It is like watching a blind man tap-tapping his way down a lane, with its hedgerows filled with primroses and violets. He doesn't know what he is missing, but we wonder what possible compensatory reward he has for this absent faculty.

Putting, as I do, such high value on reading, knowing, as I know, the immense gain derived from books by Johnson, Newton, Gibbon, Macaulay, Lamb, Hazlitt, Cobbett and indeed almost any man who has left the world richer for his having lived, it is imperative after the war to secure the maximum amount of accessibility to books and also to provide every possible stimulus to youth to read more.

There must be more reading aloud by parents to the very young, more time allowed in school for silent reading—we teachers spend far too much time teaching and far too little time letting the pupil do something—a vast extension of the library system, a vast increase in books bought and kept at home, a room in the house where youth can curl up and read undisturbed by radio or family dissensions, public lectures by authoritative critics on the new as well as the old, cheap and attractive reprints of all that is worth reprinting, and—if it is humanly possible—a diminution in the output of the meretricious, suggestive and vulgar magazines and novels that now make such fortunes for the purveyors of pornography.

## XI

### GIRLS

I do not pretend that the fact that I have daughters ranging in age from seven to twenty-seven gives me any special right to prescribe for the upbringing of girls.

My own system or lack of system has not worked out and is not working out too well.

I have always believed in giving youth as much rope as possible. Freedom has always been uppermost in my mind, but freedom should be disciplined.

My elder daughter is married. She has carved out her own career and I have been of very little help to her.

My younger daughters are at present delightful but intractable.

I may say at once that I am glad to have had daughters. I prefer daughters to sons. I prefer, in the main, feminine society to that of my own sex.

I am having both my younger daughters educated in a boys' preparatory school.

I am quite sure that is good for them. It toughens them and in any event I disapprove of the segregation of the sexes at any age.

I would far rather teach girls than boys, for the simple reasons that girls instinctively work harder and that I like girls.

On the other hand, I am extremely disturbed by their attitude to life.

I am writing this at a popular seaside resort full of Canadian, Australian and American airmen, all young, full of high spirits, in perfect physical condition. The fact that the girls of the town are attracted by them is only natural.

What is less natural is the absurd way in which they

overdo their make-up. It has the inevitable and regrettable result of making the airmen mistake their disposition, which may be flighty, but is not vicious.

There are indications that there is a good deal of promiscuous lovemaking, but in spite of their faces I cannot believe that there are really so many young amateur harlots as would appear to a superficial observer.

Even in peace-time the monkey parade was popular. A pick-up does not necessarily end in fornication. I have no statistics to guide me here, only a vague feeling of disquiet, based on too many scenes of foolish drinking in cocktail bars by young girls whose heads or stomachs are not strong enough to hold their liquor, and too many instances of foolish cackling and giggling to encourage the male to jump to a conclusion for which there is no real warrant.

The fact that contraceptives are so widely and openly displayed makes it plain that promiscuity is on the increase. So does the unpleasant rise in the incidence of venereal diseases.

What I dislike most of all is the harsh, greedy glitter in the eyes of the majority of quite young girls.

It has to be remembered that sexual attraction is the most powerful and most natural of all our feelings and can be, and should be, easily the most satisfying.

In youth the boy begins by idealising the other sex. Of the two, I should say, without sufficient evidence, that the girl is the more earthy.

This may be because, owing to the nature of things, lovemaking is only one, though the highest, of man's activities; it is woman's main business.

Functionally she is essentially mother, whereas functionally man is not essentially father. He is also fighter, scientist, leader, explorer, scholar, and wage-earner.

So where a man is primarily attracted by a woman's sexual potentialities, a girl may be attracted by all sorts of other qualities in a man.

To put it in another way, the aim of education so far as a girl is concerned, is to fit her to become a good mother; the aim so far as a boy is concerned, is to fit him to become a good citizen.

It should not preclude us from also providing an education for girls to fit them to take their place by the side of men as fighters, scientists, leaders, explorers, wage-earners, but if the race is to continue, it must give second place to the making of a home and the rearing of a family.

In the services, the Wrens, W.A.A.F.S. and those in the Women's Land Army, are doing hard and grand work, they look grand. They wear the King's uniform gives them self-respect. They meet the men in uniform, and make admirable companions. The mating between men and women in the forces can scarcely fail to produce healthy children.

It is the flightier shop-girls, the wealthier munition-workers, that I am worried about.

When work is over they appear to have but two aims. First to overpaint and underdress conspicuously to guarantee getting off with some man in uniform, or if that fails to give vent to ill-controlled passions by proxy at the pictures.

It is an extremely damning indictment of the age that the cinema should be so much the most popular relaxation for women and children.

The percentage of films that are worth abandoning three hours of good fresh air for is infinitesimal.

There is certainly little temptation to walk up and down draughty streets in a gloomy winter black-out.

One of the grosser mistakes of the government, for which there is not any defence whatever, is the keeping up of this absurd superstition that a black-out is a handicap to bombing aircraft.

The R.A.F. prides itself in pin-pointing its every objective and it certainly could not be more precise in



its aim if every light were turned on and window-blind pulled up in every city in the Reich.

The black-out has had a far more depressing effect than any other deprivation that we have been called upon to suffer, and it is a completely unnecessary addition to our burdens.

So far as youth is concerned, it has certainly played a large part in the increase of promiscuous sexual intercourse that we all deplore.

When such an abjectly low form of entertainment as the films is the only alternative, I should be the last person to blame youth for snatching at anything.

I would myself far rather walk out in the rain or snow with any girl, however dumb, picked up in the darkness, than be condemned to sit in the foetid atmosphere of the average cinema, surrounded by sneezers and coughers and have to endure what passes for humour, comedy, tragedy or romance on the screen.

But if we cared anything at all about youth we should not reduce them to such an alternative.

There is, you may protest, the Youth Movement. There are Girls' Clubs, the Girl Guides.

I see a good deal of Girls' Clubs. I applaud the well-intentioned and often heart-breaking endeavours of those who devote their lives to them, but I do not like them.

If anything, I like the girls who attend them even less than the giggling and flighty girls who cat-call in the streets.

There is an atmosphere of Sunday School priggishness about them that I find very distasteful. It may be inevitable that the girls who join them should give the impression that they are too ugly to attract the opposite sex, and so, soured, band together to prove that the male doesn't count.

Now what I want to see, and what must come after the war, is some common clearing-house or meeting place, where boys and girls can meet to dance, meet to play, meet to discuss whatever problems interest them,

without Social Service overseers, without being drawn into any sectarian branch of the church, a place where they can develop their individual idiosyncrasies and find a channel for their emotional and physical and intellectual desires to get a proper outlet.

This does not seem to me an unreasonable demand.

The only difficulty at the moment is that elementary education appears to leave its victims with no desire whatever, except to be swept along unthinking with the great vulgar mass.

The cinema demands no thought, stirs no aesthetic chord, panders to the most easily swayed of our senses, so "let's go there."

Few elementary school children seem to be taught the vital fact that nearly everything that is worth doing, that is in the true sense enjoyable, demands an effort. They regard all effort as something to be avoided.

Hence this dismal sight of masses content to wander through life quite aimlessly, working with no zeal, for wages and not for the work's sake, dissipating their wages on passive pleasures that are as much an anodyne as opium, and as harmful to the mind and spirit as that drug is to the body.

I want girls to take an immense pride in their bodies, to be clean, to take trouble over their hair, finger-nails, stockings and clothes. In a word, it is part of a girl's contribution to life to be as smart and attractive as she can possibly be.

In passing, I should like to point out that I have yet to meet the man who thought plucked eyebrows smart, or painted claw-like finger nails anything but a sign of the tigress.

But smartness and attractiveness are vague terms. To imitate the way the film star dresses her body or her hair is as foolish as to ape her manner of speaking or her private life.

It is worth remembering that the film star has, more often than not, a sub-human intelligence, and lives in

a world that bears no relation whatever to the world as we know it, or could wish it. She is grotesquely overpaid and overvalued for qualities which are luckily extremely short-lived. Who were the film stars of 1933?

The average girl through ignorance hitches her wagon to the wrong star.

I applaud her constant recourse to her mirror, though I doubt if she sees what I see when she looks at her face. To repair the ravages of time, even if that time is only ten minutes, is as sensible as Doctor Johnson's dictum about a man keeping his friendships in constant repair.

What I do most earnestly want to see on the part of young girls is the addition of another mirror to the vanity bag, a mirror to provide an index to the mind.

Advanced discoveries following from television may well provide such mirrors. If they don't uncomfortably distort, they will certainly disconcert.

In lieu of such a mirror I should like to see a daily-kept diary in every girl's vanity bag, honestly kept, never of course divulged, except to her own self-accusing eyes. There she would enter and there she would read her failures to make up mentally, so that she could keep her mind in good repair.

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of honest diary-keeping for everybody, most of all for girls, to start them thinking.

"She thinks a lot of herself" is usually a term of condemnation. I want girls to think a lot more of themselves; by so doing they would find far less reason for that too easy satisfaction that overtakes those who think so little that they substitute a wholly fanciful image of their real selves.

From the way that most unprepossessing girls look at their faces in their mirrors, it is obvious that they see there a second Hedy Lamarr or whoever the celluloid goddess of the moment happens to be.

Perhaps a continuous chronicle of their daily doings or attempts to grapple with the problem of living might

make them emulate, or even see themselves as possessing, the mental alertness of Julian Huxley.

I realise of course that, given the choice, most of the girls of whom I am thinking to-day would not hesitate for a second between Lamarr and Huxley. They would all rather be Lamarr.

All girls pray—if they pray at all—to be physically attractive. How few even wish, much less pray, to be mentally attractive.

What is so strange is the average girl's ignorance of the indisputable fact that brains improve the face.

If only the brainless realised how vacant and animal-like their faces are, they would endeavour to cultivate their minds, just in order to make themselves physically attractive.

In any post-war common clearing-house I should have an Information Bureau where such simple facts as these would be disseminated as widely as possible.

To counterbalance the ignorance, laziness and fear of parents I would have competent authorities on tap, ready to explain any function of the body or of the mind that any boy or girl wants explained.

We have reached a stage when we need the clearest possible elucidation about God, sex, the mind and the body inculcated before the mind has set. We see the tremendous physical difference that can be made by a few simple regular physical jerks. Youth, and especially girls, would gain immeasurably by a regular course of simple mental jerks.

I now want to discuss in some detail points raised by Miss Jephcott in her helpful book *Girls Growing Up*.

She begins with the autobiography of a club girl, May Smith, a serious-minded girl of twenty who is seldom bothered by the other sex because she is fat, so fat in fact that she daren't either dance or swim. It is not surprising to hear her confess that "food and eating are my favourite hobbies." It is more surprising to hear that she loves housework and thinks herself pretty lucky to be alive.



I should describe May as happy but illiterate, and almost of no value, either to herself or the community. She is just the type to accept newspaper horoscopists as infallible prophets, and the cinema as an infallible guide to deportment and morality.

I cannot believe that the fact of raising the school-leaving age from fourteen to sixteen *per se*, is going to turn her into a more desirable type of citizen.

The education provided is too meagre, the work that follows it too monotonous and passive.

"The fact," says Miss Jephcott, "that girls do actually dislike their jobs does not excuse the fault of society which in normal times compels so many of them to spend those years when their intelligence is at its height, on work which makes so little demand on their real abilities."

Any work that causes girls to be mentally lazy ought, in a civilized community, to be done by machines.

It is disconcerting to realise that there are some 2,000,000 working boys and girls in this island under eighteen, the majority of whom have no idea of, or indeed take any interest in, the implications of the war, or any suspicion that it can have any fundamental effect upon their individual lives.

Their wages are now good. They are incapable of looking ahead. They save only a minute part of these wages, the rest goes in the cinema, the dance hall, cigarettes, cosmetics and dress.

By far the most distressing indictment made by Miss Jephcott is to be found in her chapter on Reading.

Most of us certainly never see, and probably have never even heard of the magazines that form the staple diet of the average working girl.

As I have already pointed out they read "bloods."

We need to go carefully here, because the Brains Trust are unanimous that "bloods" are good for boys. Why not then for girls?

I am a great believer in retardation of development, particularly in aesthetics and the intellect.

There is, of course, a danger lest we retard development too much.

It fills me with apprehension to see what a high percentage of adult Americans gloat over comic strips, surely as pointless a waste of paper as can be imagined.

Miss Jephcott's criticism is perhaps all the more forceful for being so quiet.

"There is no greatness about the people or the events of their false world, and nothing which makes any appeal to the idealism which is one of the lovely gifts of adolescence. If the food is low-grade, it is only too likely that the mental and spiritual quality of the consumer will be the same."

It has of course been contended, and I think with justice, that if girls fare less well than boys in life it is because they have, until lately, been denied equality of opportunity. Every thinking man must deplore the attitude of the medical profession who have stood in the way of allowing equal opportunity for female medical students.

I can see no reason whatever for differentiating between the sexes when it comes to their fitness for most jobs. I see no reason for giving the male a higher rate of pay for doing precisely the same job.

Women, no less than men, first require equal economic freedom, and the fact that they have for so long been compelled to be dependent economically on man accounts for much of their weakness.

It is, for instance, to be hoped that we shall never again revert to the slave-market ideal of the London season, where mothers vied with each other to bring their daughters out and get them engaged between the opening and closing of the Royal Academy.

The best sort of mating depends on mutual respect, and it certainly does not make for mutual respect when the male is the sole worker and the female is only a physically attractive drone. We have proved in war-time that even motherhood need not prevent a woman from

earning a living. It ought to be possible after the war to see that every girl is capable of earning her living and so be freed from the degrading business of searching round for a man to keep her.

"A woman," said Virginia Woolf, "must have money and a room of her own, if she is to write fiction."

I would delete the last six words and say "Every woman must have money and a room of her own."

Then she will be free to choose a husband if and when she wants one, and furthermore, when she finds him, she will really be a helpmeet for him.

There will, I hope, be no room in the post-war world for the pretty, idle, decorative doll. Every woman will have to pull her weight and develop her attractiveness for the good not only of herself, but also of the State.

## XII

### SEX

THE Bishop of Rochester, Dr. C. M. Chavasse, whose judgment through a period of years I have every reason to regard as sound, has startled me by saying in the Upper House of Convocation: "We are on the verge of something like a sex war. Decent young women are beginning to say that it is unsafe to go out with eleven out of twelve young men, and young men are beginning to look upon young women as potential prostitutes."

The Archbishop of Canterbury has for a long time deplored a growing tendency towards a general demoralisation in youth's attitude to sex, and the recent publicity given by the Ministry of Health to the prevalence of venereal disease is, I suppose, in itself proof that promiscuity is on the increase.

Doctor Sherwood Taylor, the eminent scientist, has added his testimony.

"It is generally believed that the use of contraceptives has led to increased promiscuity. The opinion of the public that its sexual behaviour has become much more promiscuous is largely based on a change in the habits of the middle and upper classes, whose instincts were formerly restrained by fear of the social ruin which resulted from the birth of an illegitimate child.

"Contraception is now allowing these classes to adopt the almost universal human habit of sexual intercourse before marriage."

The evidence of novels, plays and films certainly bears this out.

It is extremely difficult to produce statistical evidence.

The point that matters is, how far youth gains or loses by the change in custom.



The Church, of course, sets its face dead against sexual intercourse before marriage.

War makes it almost inevitable, owing to the general disruption of family life, the absence of parental influence, the need for an outlet for pent-up emotions, especially of the sex-starved soldier, sailor and airman, the glamour attaching to a uniform, the high tension all round, and the general indifference towards the efficacy of the Christian ethic.

What I think nobody can fail to deplore is the disappearance, if it has disappeared, of adolescent idealism in love.

It is one thing to give way to quite natural sexual desire. It is quite another to stimulate this desire before it is matured.

It is generally believed that the average young girl may well be interested in the other sex without having any sexual impulse. It is equally believed that a youth naturally tends to place the object of his affection on so high a plane as to subdue any fleshly longings about her for a considerable period. This used to be known as calf-love and was an easy transference from the love felt for parents or brothers and sisters to someone outside the family group.

To short-circuit this stage of human affection means a serious loss to the individual.

It was this sort of affection that inspired the Elizabethans, who were at least as tough and used to fighting as we are, to indite lyrics to their "Mistress", a word that did not then bear the implication that it does now.

I cannot of course speak for the woman, but from the man's point of view it is surely undeniable that the sexual act is infinitely more satisfying when it satisfies the spirit as well as the body. Giving rein to a sudden impulse to have intercourse with a strange girl cannot satisfy man's inner craving for complete communion in the same way that final consummation does. This

can only truly be shared with someone whom one has known long enough to share earth's beauty and some of life's trials.

In other words married love, mutually shared, is life's highest bliss, while the quick satisfaction of a passing desire seldom satisfies anything but an animal instinct.

It is worth noticing (it is all too little noticed) that we share with animals cycles and periods in which the sexual impetus lies dormant, followed by periods in which the sexual impetus looms large, and it seems to me important to remind youth of this.

I certainly would have early instruction given in this, to emphasise the fact that the sexual urge is natural, powerful and altogether right, but that, like electricity, it needs to be harnessed and disciplined.

I have no statistical proof of the fact, but I believe that Land Girls, by virtue of their work on farms, have a far shrewder and healthier outlook on sexual matters than girls who work in factories and offices.

I think it is easy to overstress the warnings about the dangers of promiscuity. I do not think that enough stress is laid on the mental, moral and spiritual degeneration that follows upon treating sexual appetite as of no more importance than our appetite for food and drink.

Incidentally, we do not encourage youth to make a habit of concentrating too intently on the stomach and are not slow to warn the young about the danger of habitual smoking and drinking.

Everyone knows how the drink habit grows. We may not notice any disintegration of the system (because it is often a slow process) when we take to chain cigarette-smoking, or rotting our stomachs with increasing recourse to gin or other spirits, but we certainly cannot fail to notice how large a percentage of our earnings is dissipated in smokes and drinks with nothing to show for the expenditure but slacker fibres. The habit of satisfying our fleshly lusts is no less insidious, and as quickly loses its fascination and stimulating effect.

On the whole I think the young woman is more blameworthy than the young man.

The serving soldier, far from home, is in sore need of feminine affection. This affection can, of course, be sublimated without sexual intercourse.

The trouble is that the girl, in her eagerness to please, finds it necessary to dress and make-up in such a glaringly provocative way as to stress her physical allure, even when her desire does not lie in that direction.

It must also be remembered that sex is a mystery, and to probe its mysteries is one of life's greatest adventures.

When, as not infrequently happens, obstacles are put in the way of a couple of young lovers getting married, I cannot wholly blame them if they forgo the ceremony that both of them desire.

There is a natural mating-time, and that time is when both the girl and boy are young and lusty. I think it a great mistake when two people have proved (so far as is humanly possible) that they are fitted for each other, to allow financial or any other obstacle to stand in the way of their union. That certainly encourages promiscuity.

But what youth has to work out for itself both now and after the war is a way by which the sexual impulse can be controlled and satisfied without having recourse to casual and passing intimacies that defeat their own end by killing all the finer instincts.

For make no mistake about it, the body takes its implacable revenge against those who abuse it in any way, and to give play to the brutish is to become a brute, to satisfy the sensual is to kill the senses.

Too often youth is urged to be moral on the ground that monogamy is the foundation of our society, and that to be amoral or immoral is an offence against the State.

This seems to me to be a method of approach that is likely to find little sympathy.

It is a very good thing continually to impress on youth a sense of its duty to the State.

It is equally important to stress the importance of the State's duty to the individual, and even more important to emphasise the duty of the individual to himself or herself, and the line I think that should be taken with youth is to prove, if we can prove, and if it is true, that love is the most important thing in the world, that all Christ's teaching turns on it, and that love is the enemy of lust.

We should try to show youth what it must instinctively know for itself, that there is a magnetic drawing power between the sexes. Nature has her own purpose in this, the propagation of the species, but the aesthetic and spiritual impulses should go hand in hand with the animal. It is this which distinguishes us from the animal, or rather from some of the animals. The desires to mother, protect, be courteous to, give unselfishly, give way to the object of one's affections, are all part of and preliminary to the desire to share with him or her that final communion which, to be wholly happy, must still be mystic as well as physical.

To bring this about it is not the slightest use of warn boys not to mix with girls, or vice versa. The sexes should mingle as much as possible, as freely as possible when they feel like it, but more opportunity must be given for them to meet and be together in agreeable surroundings, where they can share the delight of listening to music and dancing to it, of walking together under the benign influence of an aesthetically satisfying countryside, and less severely limited by the choice between draughty, wet, cold inhospitable city pavements and the meretricious atmosphere of cinema and music hall.

It is only too easy to forget that youth has instinctively the highest ideals about the other sex, ideals that are as light as gossamer and as easily broken, and once broken, as hard to repair as a dropped tea-cup.

Youth's virginity, in spite of all modern attempts to



discount it, is certainly more precious than rubies, and to boast of deflowering it, as many men do, is about as sensible as boasting of murder or burglary.

All three are anti-social, and as such deserving of punishment.

This works both ways.

It is as easy for a girl to seduce a boy as for a boy to seduce a girl and just as common.

I should like every boy and girl to read *Jude the Obscure*, to show how a boy can be trapped and ruined by an over-sexed girl, and equally frustrated and ruined by the whimsical, capricious, too physically fastidious type of neurotic, under-sexed girl, of which Sue Bridehead is the classic example.

### XIII

#### SNOBBERY

"Now," says A. L. Rowse, "I am not a gentleman, I am glad to say. I cannot understand anybody preferring to be a gentleman to being even the most insignificant possessor of a very little genius."

The implication would seem to be—a queer one coming from a Fellow of All Souls—that no gentleman has genius, and that our choice in life lies between being a gentleman and having no genius, or having genius and being no gentleman.

This is all the more strange in view of the fact that it was also A. L. Rowse who said "There may be people silly enough to think it snobbery to prefer civilised standards and a world of culture and tradition to the great heart of the people. I have no use for the great heart of the people. Or rather that is about all of theirs that I have any use for: their emotional life, its depth and sincerity and vitality and directness, is their greatest strength, not their intelligence, their wit, brilliance, subtlety, variety of conversation or understanding. After all the magnificent achievements of English Literature, of the English political tradition, of English history, English science, are the work of the upper and middle classes, not of the people.

"What a dreary quagmire is the history of the Labour Movement—Robert Owen, the Chartist, the Trade Unions, Ramsay MacDonald—compared with the splendour and magnificent achievement of Elizabeth and the Cecils, the resplendent services to the nation of the Churchills, the Pitts, Nelson and Drake."

The whole structure of post-war society is going to depend on youth's attitude to this question.

We have always been accused of being a snobbish

race. I regard that as an explanation of our success. If we want to be like our leaders so much the better. It makes for more leaders. To be continually dissatisfied with our work is to keep before us a high standard.

Not to deplore that other people have more advantages than ourselves, but to extend these advantages and make full use of them, will be the main object of the post-war generation.

If this is snobbery I strongly approve of it.

To want to read better books and to be ashamed of being seen in the company of the second-rate is admirable.

To want to learn to appreciate good music and to rise above our passion for the tawdry and cheap is excellent.

To break down this caste or class distinction by abolishing the vulgar is altogether praiseworthy.

What is not praiseworthy but damnable is the tendency to revile and seek to destroy those who have found the better way.

It is simply not true to suggest that the old order of squirearchy, the lucky possessors of beautiful country houses and the means to occupy their leisure, widely abused their privilege. In the main they were leaders of culture. From what sort of homes did Shelley, Gibbon, Milton, Arnold, Browning, Tennyson, Nelson, Churchill, the Cecils, the Huxleys, Darwin, Sir Christopher Wren, Fielding and Jane Austen (to select quite at random a bunch of our leaders) spring?

Good homes, good pictures, good music and good libraries provided the background for most of those who have come to the fore in our national life, and if it is snobbery to want to be like them, snobbery becomes one of our greatest virtues, and a most valuable quality in the formation of character.

Farmers and breeders lay great stress on pedigree and breeding in animals.

It seems illogical to attempt to disregard them in man. The lord ought to approximate more closely to New-

man's definition of a gentleman than a commoner, and in my experience usually does.

"A man's a man for a' that," sang Burns, and indeed I have known a famous marquis who was certainly not a gentleman, and many ploughmen and shepherds who certainly were.

The fact that her father worked his own farm struck my mother as in some way dishonourable, the fact that she was very distinctly connected with a member of the peerage gave her an undoubted cachet.

I should certainly like to be a Duke, and I am as proud as Shakespeare to be able to flaunt armorial bearings.

When I was a master at Sherborne, a housemaster's wife took exception to my respect and admiration for Thomas Hardy, who lived nearby, on the ground that he was "not quite a gentleman."

Opinion is now strongly set the other way.

I have heard so much contumely heaped on the birth qualification that it seems illogical to see anybody stand up for the National Anthem, or speak respectfully of the King and Queen.

In my mother's eyes, all Nonconformists were of a lower social caste than followers of the Established Church. She must, I think, have based this quaint assumption on the fact that the Methodist minister was our gardener.

In the eyes of the majority of people of her generation and upbringing, Christ cannot have been a gentleman because he was a carpenter, and certainly my mother would not have failed to account for Hitler's inconvenient attitude to the civilised world by the fact that he was a house-painter.

This business of snobbery strikes at the very root of the whole matter of education and educational reform.

The bitter attacks now levelled against the Public Schools are based on the supposition that Public Schools keep up the barriers between the classes, when the whole aim of the modern state is to break them down.



If you have a vast flood of sluggish contaminated water about to burst its banks and flow into a gentle stream of clear water, the resultant flood may sweep over the land. It won't exactly improve the land.

It is the volume that counts.

As I see it, the two streams are not yet ready to converge.

Both Public and Elementary educational waters need a good deal of purifying by themselves, for their constituent contaminations are quite different.

That the elementary schools should incorporate all the good points that they can from the Public Schools is admirable. To swamp the Public Schools with something less good in quality than themselves is damnable. Nobody benefits.

As this question of snobbery is of so vital an importance in our national life, it is worth looking into more closely.

If snobbery means a desire to be less vulgar and ill-informed than you are, it is obviously a good thing, though no one in his senses wants to see the revival of a caste system which places the doctor in one coterie and the dentist in a lower coterie.

The Victorian gentry turned up their noses at the little tradesmen, but were quick to welcome the tradesman who made enough money to buy the big house and entertain lavishly.

It is unnecessary to elaborate the obvious evils of snobbery, which caused mistresses to treat domestic servants as a lower form of creation, devoid of all feeling, which caused heart-burnings among those who just failed to be received by "the County", and caused some of those who were "County" to be arrogant on no credentials. It would be easy to write a book on the Sins of Society. Indeed a book with that title once had a considerable vogue.

But I find the inverted snobbery of the present day even more disquieting, because it may become more powerful.

Nothing will make me believe that it is better not to speak the King's English than to speak it correctly.

There is a striking list of Shibboleths that sharply divide the sheep from the goats. The nation is full of "Pardoners", "Excusers", "That's righters", and "Well—you could 'ave knocked me down wiv a featherers."

Everywhere the shout goes up "Equal opportunity. Provide equal opportunity."

Why, I ask, do not the herd take advantage of the manifold opportunities at any rate to speak their native tongue correctly? The answer to that is simple. It is that they will not take the trouble.

They resent the speech, as they resent the qualities that mark the gentleman, because both the speech and the acquisition of these qualities demand effort and thought.

It is one mark of the gentleman that he is not a self-seeker. His life is in the main one of service. It is the mark of the herd that it is always grabbing something for itself and expects the State always to be doing something on its behalf.

Everybody is agreed that there should be a wider distribution of the good things of this earth, but distribution is of little value unless you accompany it with the capacity to enjoy and not to defile these good things. And the capacity to enjoy does not simply mean opening the mouth, ears and eyes. It entails considerable effort in learning how to use your mouth, ears and eyes.

We have to learn to eat less grossly, speak more logically, listen more attentively, look with more concentration.

Instead of casting scorn on snobbery, we need to cultivate a more snobbish attitude, if by snobbery we mean imitation of the best.

In other words, if youth is going to make any progress towards a better world, it will have not to abolish degrees, titles, ceremonies and so on, but to increase the veneration accorded to them in time past.

What they can and should do, is to make certain that these degrees and titles are worthy of veneration, and not as so many of them are to-day, empty of all meaning.

In other words, I am all for keeping the lords who live up to their honourable titles and give a good account of their stewardship and all for the deposition of such peers as fail to give a good account of their stewardship.

The Government, in the country's best interest, have now the power to uproot farmers who fail to work their farms properly. I would like to see this power extended to deprive peers of their privileges when they abuse them.

I am all for the preservation of an aristocracy, so long as it is in fact an aristocracy (the best in its kind), and no longer.

When every man is as good as his master, nobody is any good at all.

It is worth noticing that in Russia, where we expect to find under Communism the widest possible attempt to produce a general levelling, the aristocratic principle is most rigidly adhered to in the new schools, for the pupils for the best schools are hand-picked, and insistence is certainly laid on degrees of worth and achievement.

The form of snobbery (Labour M.P.s call it that) which I strongly approve, is that which inspires a cricketer to wear an M.C.C. or I.Z. tie, or any member of any school of which he is proud to wear the old boy's tie.

It is an excellent form of snobbery for the poor to refuse the rich man's charity, for that means that he relies on the State to provide his education, his hospital, and his pension. No man has a right to demand anything from the State unless he has earned it, so at last we may perhaps get from the self-seekers a certain amount of service of the kind that hitherto has been so freely and disinterestedly given by the more fortunate.

It is a curious form of snobbery, to which I in common

with many other West countrymen am prone, to pride oneself on the fact that one's family has for long been connected with a particular house or locality.

That I take to be typical English snobbery.

If it be snobbery to resent the insolence of those who are paid to serve, I am glad to be a snob, though in fairness here, I should like to say how glad I am that the insolence of those who paid to be served has now vanished. I am in agreement with D. W. Brogan when he says that "the shopping voices of many products of Roedean or Wycombe Abbey is one of the most distressing sounds in the world. Fortunately, most English girls get over this stage, but those who don't, recruit that large class of formidable middle-aged women with whom England is too well supplied. There ought to be a law about it."

There certainly ought to be a law about those waiters and waitresses who take advantage of a shortage of supply, both in food and service, to treat all would-be customers like dogs.

If I am to be made to feel inferior, I prefer to be made so by someone in whom I recognise some superiority in merit and intelligence.

Far too often I am made to feel that I am on the point of being sent to the guillotine in a restaurant if I dare to ask for a glass of water. For failing to get it I am supposed to give the waiter a gratuity of ten per cent of my bill.

As a reward for combined rudeness and truculence, a taxi driver usually expects between thirty-three and fifty per cent added to his fare.

It is a topsy-turvy system which countenances, and indeed encourages, this sort of piracy.

To bite the hand that feeds one is an aspect of democracy that makes no appeal to me. It is on a par with the spirit of the workman who refuses to touch his cap to a lady, on the ground that cap-lifting undermines his sense of independence.



I would take off my hat to every small child if I thought it would give him any pleasure. I should increase my self-respect, not lose it, by such an act of courtesy.

The place where true democracy can best be seen, where false snobbery is not tolerated, is in the bar of any country inn. Here everyone treats everyone else on equal terms, and when a man airs an opinion, he gets a fair hearing, and invites candid criticism.

The place where democracy is seen at its worst is on a public holiday, in a public park or on the promenade of any seaside resort, where you see regiments of monstrous young women, overpainted, under-dressed, their hair done in imitation of the newest film-star, their speech beyond belief vacuous, their laughter like the crackling of thorns under a pot, their minds obsessed by a single thought, to attract the passing male.

Their eyes and mouths, even in their teens, are harsh and greedy enough to counterbalance any natural pretensions to prettiness or beauty.

The boys whom they seek to attach themselves to are in better case, in that their interests are not limited to one.

They like the companionship of each other, which can seldom be said of young shop-girls, who only walk about in pairs because it is easier to get off in pairs than singly.

They sit and guffaw at all passers-by who don't conform to their own vitiated taste.

These are the potential mothers and fathers of those who are going to lead the world of to-morrow.

Nobody questions their physical courage, their patriotism, or their powers of endurance. The whole nation, irrespective of any class distinction, shares those admirable qualities.

But if it is snobbery to deplore their complete lack of taste, of interest in anything that matters, of any desire to share civic responsibilities, of any real zest to develop their minds, or to enlarge their spiritual horizon, then I am proud to be a snob.

It is unthinkable that any good could come out of a world modelled to satisfy their appetites.

## XIV

### THE COUNTRYSIDE

"Not in the entire history of the English people," says H. E. Bates, "have so many people been conscious of the countryside as they are to-day. There never was a time when so many books and articles were demanded, and written, on that subject."

We are all very much concerned with post-war planning about the countryside.

Many of us are concerned because the Scott and Uthwatt recommendations seem to fall on deaf ears.

The farmers are concerned about Government policy with regard to agriculture.

All of us who care about the preservation of amenities are concerned about the cessation of spoliation.

Mr. Bates foresees the disappearance of the great country house.

"We do not want," he says, "to work for people in great houses; fewer and fewer of us want to own great houses for people to work in."

"We want to be free. So the great house, with its selfish, enviable protection, slips another stage out of our lives. One war broke its power: another destroys even its utility. It remains a splendid melancholy anachronism, and we have discovered nothing to put in its place."

Many of us deplore the passing of places like Blenheim, mansions like Chatsworth, and glorious manor houses like Haddon Hall, but only if and when the owners have proved themselves good landlords, and good stewards of their possessions, not withholding from the general public the right to walk through their woods and parks, look at their galleries of pictures and state rooms, and on certain days have access to their gardens.

I have always considered it reprehensible that owners of lovely and historic homes should have the right to deny their fellow countrymen even a sight of the out-sides of these places.

Now, with few exceptions, big estate owners can no longer afford to hold them or keep them up, and they will presumably be converted into country hotels, hospitals, asylums, and, most desirable of all, schools.

Here is a solution of the School Base principle.

An admirable lead has been given by Major ffennell, who has presented the whole of the famous Wytham Wood estate and his own home to the University of Oxford for educational purposes, and Sir Richard Livingstone rightly applauds the decision of the National Trust to accept the gift of country houses to be used as centres of residential adult education.

What I view with some misgiving is our failure to find any adequate substitute for the best type of rich landowner who not infrequently inspired a whole community to keep its land in good heart.

Certainly no State Department could ever provide that satisfying personal influence, often bordering on the eccentric, always finely individual, that characterised such landowners as Coke of Holkham.

Mr. Bates also foresees the doom of the country parson.

"In war," he says, "it is a curious thing that it is not only the fighters who die, but those who stay at home. It is not only men who perish, but institutions. In the last war we saw the Church, the great house, and the village community, disintegrate and lose their power and character. In this war we see the great house slip a little farther into decay.

"We see the Church floundering a little deeper into the lonely marshes of abstract ideals; planless, directionless, out of touch. It inducts its parsons in villages that do not need them. Of all the relics of the old countryside one is sorriest for them. They draw their life from an impossible system that seems to have no sane place

in the planning of the future. Their lives were once clear, and I think, decent and useful.

They supplied education of a kind, advice, direction, a link between man and master. Where are they now? They are condemned to an impossible life in impossible houses."

I agree about the impossible houses.

I was an only child, and for fifty-one years my father lived in a vast barracks of a rectory which drained all his slender resources.

Delapidations were my mother's unending nightmare ever since I can remember.

I cannot however, agree that it is an impossible life. It seems to be a very useful life so long as the country rector or vicar knows intimately everyone in his parish, whether they are church, chapel or indifferent to organised religion, so long as he regards himself as official chronicler and historian of his parish, so long as he gives a lead not only in spiritual, but also in cultural matters, so long as he is on the same friendly terms with the poacher as with the squire. He can be and should be, the final arbiter in local disputes, capable of providing legal as well as moral advice.

If the country parson disappears we have nothing to put in his place, but it would be a good idea to pool all ecclesiastical economic resources, and to readjust the present inequitable situation, where one parson with a care of a hundred people has a living worth £1,000 a year while his neighbour, with several thousands under his care is expected not only to exist himself, but to dispense charity on an income of £200 and £300 a year.

It would be a wise solution to re-group livings, so that all parsons should have as much work to do as they are capable of doing, and to adopt the Wesleyan system of keeping ministers constantly on the move by giving them a circuit.

This would enable each village to benefit by having a quick succession of spiritual leaders of many diverse characters.



A spiritual leader of some sort, to whom every countryman can have frequent and immediate access, seems to me essential.

I quite agree with Mr. Bates that there are certain grand characteristics about the country that are indestructible, particularly the ancient tradition that has enabled the craftsman to produce a number of things that combine utility, durability and beauty.

But what of the countryman himself? Is Mr. Bates right in his assumption that "the countryman can no longer be tied to the parish pump and the maypole: the straw-chewing yokel is dead: to-day his counterpart hops a bus, plays the slot machine, finds solace in Ginger Rogers, and has a cup of tea at a sandwich bar in a chain store."

If the countryman hankers after urban pleasures, he must have urban wages.

It is the economic problem that will determine the future of youth in the countryside.

Already the farm-labourer's minimum wage has risen to £3 a week. Only a hundred years ago the martyrs of Tolpuddle were sentenced to transportation for daring to band together to demand a rise from eight shillings to nine shillings a week.

Unless the agriculturists band together, and form powerful Trade Unions, they will be unable to force the Government to take any steps for their betterment, and of all men the farmer is the most individual and the least obsessed with any sense of social responsibility.

Local government in the countryside is regarded with almost complete indifference by those who live in it.

Something has got to be done about that, and as I see it, the only way is to arouse a civic sense in the children in the country schools.

I like Mr. Bates' suggestion (which is, of course, the School Base idea), that the new schools for town children should be built beyond the limits of the town and serve both town and country.

"The small rural schools, reconditioned, could become

nursery schools for children of from two to five, thereby solving the rural mother's greatest problem.

"In this way both younger and older children could be assured of at least one soundly cooked meal a day—a thing which, through ignorance, laziness or sheer economic impossibility, many of them now never get."

Mr. Bates makes the unusual point that the countryside is less self-supporting than any other section of the community.

"It produces wheat, potatoes, cattle, fruit, milk and wool, but it does not produce coal, shoes, cloth, tea, tools, pottery, hats, furniture and so on."

It requires an urban standard of living with an urban standard of wage, and according to some critics, it is urban already in spirit.

Kingsley Martin, the editor of the *New Statesman* once asked:

"How many Americans have wondered at the prominence given in English speech and literature to hunting and cricket, and asked why, if they are such perfect symbols of English life, they seem so remote from the lives of ordinary people?"

"Britain is in fact, overwhelmingly an urban nation, and the national sport is not cricket (let alone fox-hunting) or Rugby football, but Association football, which interests at least six times as many English people, as spectators or gamblers or participants, as any other form of sport."

I hope it surprises you to hear that cricket is not a national sport.

Those countless village greens that Saturday after Saturday between May and September are ringed by old men watching, and occupied by young men playing cricket, are presumably not symbols of English life.

Presumably Kingsley Martin prefers to regard the gamblers on football pools as truer types of Englishmen than the cricketers on the green or the followers of the hunt.

I am more optimistic. The England that matters to most of us, the England that is to give the world a lead after the war, as it has given a lead in this war (who were the first men to enter Tunis?) has its roots in the country and is not, never has been, and never will be urban.

Indeed it is little use worrying about youth after the war unless we take into account the part that the English rural scene has played and must continue to play in the formation of youth's outlook on life and his character.

The dismal and illiberal life lived by the inhabitants of Islington is not one that I wish to see extended in the days to come.

Much will depend on youth's attitude after the war to the English countryside.

Sixty thousand girls have learnt to like working in the Women's Land Army. Tens of thousands of boys and girls have enjoyed working in harvest camps.

We are all, luckily, countrymen at heart, sprung from men and women who, for countless generations, have tilled the soil and lived by and on it.

To describe, as D. W. Brogan and Kingsley Martin do, the Englishman as a townsman, is to get a wholly inaccurate view of us.

It is true, as Mr. Brogan says, that whereas sixty years ago only twelve per cent of our people were engaged in agriculture, to-day only six per cent work on the farms. That is not due to any lack of love for the land, but to the short-sighted policy of a succession of governments who have neglected, and often betrayed the farmer.

"There is no country in the world," says Brogan, "in which feeling for the soil as a factor of production is as rare as in England."

In that event, how does he explain the fact, which he himself acknowledges, that our farmers are the best in the world?

"To believe," he continues, "that a people who have for generations lived in towns, of whom only a small

proportion has any direct connexion with the land, has in some mystical way evaded the consequences of this state of affairs, is to believe in miracles."

I would have said that it would be a miracle if the Industrial revolution, and the exodus to towns, should in so short a time have made us forget the rock whence we were hewn, the earth in which our roots lie.

"A nation of flower-growers like the English," he adds, "is a nation of shopkeepers, not a nation of farmers."

To say, as he says, "there is a lot of unnecessary drabness that is a reflexion on the taste, the energy and the public spirit of the people," is true, and proves, not our dislike of the country, but our inability to adapt ourselves to town life.

In any event, whether Brogan's opinion can be substantiated or not, it is supremely important after the war that youth should adopt a right attitude to the country.

It has always been the main source of inspiration to our poets, and it is in poetry that we lead the world.

We are fumbling our way from a world of ugly self-seeking to a world of beauty and service, and we shall still find our best inspiration in the country, where men are still capable of producing for themselves most of life's material needs and imbibing the best of her spiritual lessons.

Nothing in my travelling up and down the country strikes me more forcibly than the vacuity, aimlessness, restlessness and ugliness of the faces of boys and girls in the towns, compared with the pleasing, honest, clear-eyed faces of youth in the country places.

There is an obvious reason for this.

In the country the sense of continuity has not been disturbed.

Contrast for instance Bournemouth and Wimborne. Bournemouth has no roots. It is a rich mushroom growth of "foreigners", the retired rich from the Midlands, the holiday makers of a day or week from London, the visiting troops.



Boy meets girl in the gardens, goes off to flicks, dance, pub or the cliffs for one evening or perhaps a week. Boy moves on, girl meets someone else, repeats the petty pleasure. There is no more stability than in the shifting sands on which they gaze from their deck chairs on the cliff edge.

In Wimborne everybody knows everybody else.

One feels that the names above the shop windows are honoured names and have been the same for generations.

In the Minster there is proof of the continuity in the list of Abbesses, dating from the eighth century, in the tomb of the Beaufort ancestors of our Tudor Kings, in the 1,200 years old, Saxon wooden chest in names like that of Hawtrey Bankes, a V.C. of the Indian Mutiny.

You see it again in the market in the grizzled weather-beaten faces of the Dorset farmers coming in, Tuesday after Tuesday, as their forefathers have done since markets began, to bargain, to gossip, and to exchange views.

It is significant that the auctioneer never has to ask the name of a bidder, whether it be for day-old chicks or a prize-bull.

Everyone present knows everybody else's resources, way of living, domestic affairs, physical health, and even private vices.

Mr. Brogan is wrong. The true England is not to be found in the town. It is in the Market and on the farm.

It is just because of this that youth after the war will have to take more notice of the country than he did before.

He is the lucky one who has been born and reared in a country atmosphere, for the spirit of the country cannot really be captured on a week-end ramble or a Sunday hike.

We need to watch the apple-cheeked faces of the old women at their cottage doors, and listen to the slow wisdom of the shepherd on the downs.

I feel that too many visitors to this country have written their impressions from the lounge of the Savoy, the crowds in Oxford Street, and perhaps the bars of the public houses adjacent to Broadcasting House.

I see the distinction between these places and the true England each time I take my country farmers round before our fortnightly radio programme of Country Magazine.

Their demeanour, as well as their appearance, is wholly out of keeping with their surroundings in London. They represent an unchanged and unchanging England, Londoners represent only the superficial, money-spending changing cosmopolitan, the man of no country in particular.

Does the townsman take colour from the local geological strata? He is usually quite ignorant of what that strata is. The man of Derbyshire, Purbeck and the Cotswolds, is in such close affinity with the limestone that provides him with his livelihood as to resemble his native rock in character, in roughness, integrity and hardihood.

When a man takes no colour from his labour or surroundings, there is something wrong with both.

It is only in the country that a man's vocation can be seen in his face and behaviour.

It falls to my lot occasionally to broadcast from the studios in Maida Vale, and between rehearsal and transmission, I go out to get a breath of fresh air and wander down Elgin Avenue and neighbouring streets, watching the children at play and their elders in the local pubs.

The life of animals in the country is far more enviable.

I hope that youth after the war will have the will and power to get out of the Bayswater, Edgware Road, Maida Vale environment, as well as that of the far more virile but even less desirable environment of Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Stepney and Hackney Marshes.

I do not know whether it is true that our slums are still the worst in the world, but I do know that they are



a disgrace to a civilised community, and that the poorest labourer's child in the country has a better chance of reaching manhood and of being happy in adolescence, than the children of the East End, whose life's ambition seems to be attained if they can doll themselves up and jostle each other off the pavement as they ogle the passers-by between Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus on Saturday nights.

The country boy who spends his leisure dangling his legs over a bridge is, at any rate, knowledgeable about the fish that pass in the stream below. Nor is he deaf to the melody of the birds around him.

He may not be articulate, he certainly lacks the capacity to exchange quick wise-cracks with the passers-by, but he is in harmony with his surroundings, whereas the average town boy and girl are out of tune with everything worth while.

If Mr. Brogan's contention that we are now by nature townsmen were true, I should contemplate youth's future with more misgiving.

Luckily it is not true, but it will take courageous and drastic action to ensure that youth preserves its safety-valve of constant contact with the countryside, where it is impossible for youth to live and work in it.

The first step is, of course, to ensure that youth should be educated and play in country surroundings.

The School Base is one solution and the boarding school is another.

The education of the page in the age of chivalry was grounded in seven arts, riding, swimming, boxing, hawking, archery, chess and verse-making, and in the modern boarding schools, stress is laid upon and full opportunity given of gaining a good deal of open air exercise.

The country child gets exercise following the carts, bringing in the cows and playing round the green, the farm or the fields.

I have been immensely struck by the general well-being of the young Canadian and Australian airmen whom I have met, the great majority of whom are drawn from the country places.

Every boy and girl is the better for being able to ride, every boy and girl ought to be able to swim, every boy should box, every youngster should know something about bird life, even if hawking is no longer popular. Archery has I suppose, been supplanted by darts, chess is such a good exercise for the memory and the brain, that I should like to see it taught in all schools, while verse-making is the best help towards accuracy and vividness of speech, harmony of sound and enlarged vocabulary, ever devised.

It would do youth good to incorporate most of the points upon which the age of chivalry laid stress in its education of the Knight in embryo.

It would go a long way to dispel the idea that to cultivate the brain is to rise in the social scale, and to cultivate the body is to sink.

Books are not a substitute for life, but a fair guide to it, and more than ever do we need to cultivate the sound mind in the sound body and realise the all-important truth that manual labour is all the better done when the brain informs the hand, and that intellectual progress is determined largely by the physical.

I am sure that it would be the making of many boys if they were sent out for a year or two to Canada, to live on a farm and work as the house-man or bottle-washer, to make sure that they know how to use their hands and turn them to anything. It would undoubtedly toughen their fibres and strengthen their characters.

It is to my mind of the first importance that all children should be encouraged to know as much as possible about plant life, bird life and animal life, even if it means sacrificing some of the time now given to organised games.



Everybody is the better for having a scientific as well as an aesthetic interest in the natural world, and its usefulness in stimulating the faculties of observation and deduction is too obvious to need elaboration.

It seems to me essential if the countryside is to appeal to youth after the war, that communal centres should be established in villages, provided with communal laundry buildings with electric washing machines, electric irons, a drying-room, an ante-natal clinic, orthopaedic clinic, health clinic, meeting room for the National Farmers' Union and Young Farmers' Union, and all the halls and libraries that I outlined when I was describing the School Base.

Finally we all commend the Government's proposals for recasting the whole education service by raising the school age, reorganising the elementary schools, introducing compulsory part-time education up to 18, the inspection of all private schools, and consolidating the position of religious instruction.

It really looks as if something is going to be done to give youth the chance it deserves. It now remains to ensure that we get the right type of teachers, men and women of high ideals and strong personality. All depends upon that.